

EDUCATION



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Feminist, hedonist, humorist

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SEX TIPS FOR GIRLS

Operation was needed because the pain of walking had become too great

Queen Mother's hip replaced

By ALAN HAMILTON AND JEREMY LAURANCE

QUEEN ELIZABETH the Queen Mother was recovering in a London hospital last night after having her right hip replaced. Buckingham Palace said the 90-minute operation had been a success and that the Queen Mother was making a good recovery. She is expected to remain in the King Edward VII Hospital for Officers for two weeks.

Although frail, the Queen Mother appears well for her 95 years, but over the past few months she has shown increasing difficulty in walking. Members of her staff said that during her recent holiday in Scotland she had suffered considerable pain and been rendered virtually immobile. Yesterday's operation had been planned for some time, but news of the surgery emerged only when Buckingham Palace issued a statement afterwards.

Hip replacements have long been routine, but the Queen Mother is among the oldest patients to undergo such surgery and there are bound to be concerns about her recovery from anaesthesia. After that, the chief threats to the Queen Mother will be signs of throm-



The stay in hospital is expected to last two weeks

bolism or infection. The risk of blood clots in the legs is higher in the elderly and if the clot travels to the lung, causing pulmonary embolism, it can be fatal. The Queen Mother will therefore almost certainly have been given anti-coagulant drugs to prevent the problem arising.

Her doctors will also be anxious to avoid the wound becoming infected. Chris Bulstrode, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, said last night: "Any infection is completely catastrophic."

In its statement announcing the treatment yesterday, Buckingham Palace said: "Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother

was last night admitted to King Edward VII Hospital for Officers, Beaumont Street, London, and this morning underwent a total hip replacement operation performed by Mr Roger Vickers, assisted by Mr William Muirhead-Alwood, with anaesthesia administered by Dr D.R. Davies, assisted by Dr J.B. Liban. Dr Richard Thompson and Mr Barry Jackson were in attendance.

The operation on Queen Elizabeth's right hip took place first thing this morning and lasted around one and a half hours. The operation was completed successfully, as were the routine post-operative checks for this kind of

operation. Queen Elizabeth is making a good recovery; she is expected to remain in hospital for about two weeks. Another bulletin will be issued tomorrow morning. Daily bulletins will be issued."

Mr Vickers, who has been consultant orthopaedic surgeon to the Queen for the past three years, is secretary of the British Orthopaedic Association. A few years ago he created a furor when he was co-author of a leader in the *British Medical Journal* arguing that any surgeon who performed a hip replacement without giving anti-coagulants to a patient who later died would be unlikely to escape the courts.

Dr Thompson is the Queen's physician and head of the Medical Household and Mr Jackson is Sergeant-Surgeon to the Household. As such, their presence is routine when any member of the royal family undergoes surgery.

There are long waiting lists for hip replacements on the health service and private patients can expect to pay up to £10,000 for treatment. The Consumer Association's *Which?* magazine found typical costs at £8,281 for a 21-night stay in an NHS pay bed and £5,320 for 14 days in a private London hospital. The Queen Mother had a cataract operation four months ago, charges about £300 a day.

The Queen Mother was last seen in public at a private lunch at the Ritz on Wednesday. She has no public engagements in her diary and is unlikely to be seen again until the royal family gathers at Sandringham for Christmas.



Last public appearance: the Queen Mother leaving the Ritz on Wednesday

Record dive in inflation boosts Tories

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JANET BUSH

TORY MPs banking on a Budget boost for their fortunes were lifted yesterday by figures showing a surprise fall in inflation and a sharp improvement in the public finances.

Senior ministers hailed the news as enhancing the prospects for Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to introduce a generous tax-cutting Budget on November 28 and a reduction in interest rates over the next few weeks.

Downing Street said that "the Prime Minister believes these are very good figures" while other Tories said they were the tonic the party needed. They came as a relief to Tories after the poor unemployment and high-street sales statistics the previous day.

The 0.5 point fall in retail prices was the biggest October drop in inflation for 51 years, the Central Statistical Office reported.

The stock market reacted enthusiastically, pushing the FTSE 100 index of leading shares up 39.4 points to a record high at the close of 3,610.8.

The drop pushed the headline rate of inflation down sharply to 3.2 per cent from 3.9 per cent in September. Underlying inflation, excluding mortgage interest payments, fell to 2.9 per cent from 3.1 per cent. Capping this excellent showing was a £1.3 billion repayment of government borrowing in October due to bumper corporation tax receipts after last year's rapid economic growth.

Economists still believe the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement will overshoot its target by as much as £5 billion but the public finances do not now look as far off track as they did.

City cheers, page 25
Pennington, page 27

Christmas threat to BBC

By ANDREW PIERCE

BUCKINGHAM PALACE is considering switching the filming of the Queen's Christmas broadcast from the BBC in protest at the way it secured the *Panorama* interview with the Princess of Wales.

Relations between the Palace and the BBC have been put under severe strain by the interview, which was recorded

in strict secrecy at Kensington Palace on November 5.

A senior Palace official said last night that a final decision on whether to give the production of the broadcast to a rival channel would be made by the Queen. She said: "No institution can take for granted its relationship with the media, just as the media - and in this case the BBC - cannot take its relationship for granted with

us. We are not rushing into decisions."

The mere fact that the Palace is considering ending the 60-year-old arrangement with the BBC, even before the contents of the *Panorama* programme are disclosed, is a sign of the breakdown in relations. The BBC refused to comment.

BBC's royal mint, page 3

Age irrelevant, page 8

Woman receives coma girl's heart

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

A YOUNG woman was recovering in Papworth Hospital, Cambridge, last night after being given the heart of Leah Betts, who died earlier yesterday following her collapse into a coma when she took an Ecstasy tablet at her 18th birthday party.

Leah was certified brain dead by two doctors and her life-support system was switched off. A transplant team removed the organs at Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford, Essex, while her body remained in a ventilator. The UK Transplant Association oversees the switch of her heart and lungs to the recipient 80 miles away.

In a three-hour operation at Papworth Hospital's cardio-thoracic centre, surgeons described the recipient's condition in intensive care last night as stable. Kate Lancaster, a Papworth spokeswoman,

described the recipient only as a young woman from East Anglia.

The transplants fulfilled Leah's wish to give life to others, which her distraught parents honoured when they gave doctors permission to remove her organs.

A team of surgeons led by the cardio-thoracic consultant John Downing stood by overnight to carry out the transplant operation, which began at 6am - about four hours after Leah's death. Her other organs were expected to be transplanted, too.

Her father, Paul Betts, 49, said: "It has been horrendous for us as you can well imagine, but the thought of Leah living on in some way and helping others has made it much more bearable. It was her wish that she should help others live."

Grieving parents, page 5

SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



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Win a trip for two to Hong Kong
CAR 95
Test driving Colin McRae's RAC rally car
WEEKEND MONEY
Best pensions for part-timers
1015
Five mountain bikes to be won
VISION
The seven-day TV and radio guide

Today, high-tech pioneer, to close

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

TODAY, Britain's first high-technology full colour national daily newspaper, is to close after years of heavy financial losses and declining sales.

The paper, which was launched by Eddie Shah in 1986, will be on sale for the last time today.

Les Hinton, executive chairman of News International, owner of *Today*, said he deeply regretted the decision to close the title, which has seen its circulation drop by eight per cent in the last year to 573,680.

"Today has always been a young, pioneering paper and its most recent editor Richard Stott and his team have followed these traditions with flair and commitment... but with a modest circulation, insufficient growth and rapidly rising costs we have no alternative," Mr Hinton said. "I feel dreadful. I have been

TODAY

working in the media and newspapers for 35 years and I have not had a worse day than this," he added.

The 200 editorial staff on the left-of-centre tabloid were told of the paper's closure by the editor at 4pm yesterday. News International is to set up a special unit today to help to find jobs for some of them on other titles within the company, which also owns *The Times*, *The Sun*, *News of the World* and *The Sunday Times*.

Mr Hinton dismissed speculation that News International had decided to close *Today* so that it could invest in other British newspaper groups. He said that the company had no other immediate print publication. Continued on page 2, col 5

BREITLING
1884



OLD NAVITIMER

NAVITIMER. ON COURSE AND ON TIME. With time a crucial aspect of air travel, pilots and navigators have long viewed their watch as their basic personal instrument. Even with today's sophisticated navigation satellites and radio beacons, "flight computers" like the NAVITIMERs are still used for routine calculations. A slide rule of this kind is built into NAVITIMER mechanical chronographs. The pilot's sole personal instrument, today's NAVITIMERs are based on a design voted official watch of the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association in 1952. Relentlessly improved since then, NAVITIMERs are totally efficient and fascinating to operate while their good looks remain as unmistakable as ever.

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Drivers may join information superhighway

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN BRUSSELS

BRITISH drivers, in common with the rest of Europe, could soon choose to carry licences containing electronically stored personal data.

The European Parliament voted by 116 to 114 yesterday to endorse a proposal by the European Commission to launch the "credit-card" licences as an optional alternative to the

new cardboard Euro-licence scheduled to come into use next July. The 15 member states are expected to vote the scheme into law early next month.

The beauty of the new licence, in the eyes of its supporters, is that, as well as a photograph and the usual information about a driver, it can be fitted with a microchip carrying medical and credit details and much other data. This provoked some opposition from MEPs concerned about the potential

for abuse. "Some members fear people's civil liberties will be abused by authorities who use the information to set up files on individuals," said Brian Simpson, a British Labour member.

The Commission gave this impression when it launched the scheme last May, saying: "It is up to any person or organisation to decide if they want to consider the licence as a source of information for personal identification." But Neil Kinnock, the Transport

Commissioner and former Labour leader, emphasised that the plastic licence would be optional. Further legislation would be needed to equip them with data beyond the minimum already required by law.

Under a special dispensation, Britain will not be obliged to incorporate photographs on the new low-tech Euro-licence until 2005. Old-style licences issued before that date will continue to be valid.

South Africa v England
Close of play
England 221 for 4

Labour pledge on rail franchises

Labour would not immediately bring privatised BR passenger franchises back into public ownership after the general election. In a letter to one of the private groups bidding for BR services, Labour's transport spokesman made it clear that franchises already sold off would be allowed to run their course.

Buying The Times overseas	
Australia \$25.00	Canada \$25.00
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Spain 17.00	Sweden 17.00
Switzerland 17.00	USA 17.00
UK 17.00	



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Foreign affairs evoke glories of a distant age

Westminster in the 1990s offers the spectator a quirky blend of the modern and the antique. On Wednesday, after the Queen's Speech, paint-laden protesters and paint-spattered Tories posed for rival photo-opportunities on College Green. Inside, Tony Blair and John Major traded soundbites across the floor for the cameras.

At such moments the chamber becomes a glorified television studio. The other MPs are only there for background noise and as a backdrop. The show is a political version of *Gladiators*. But yesterday it

was different. The chamber hardly seemed the same place. Two of Parliament's most old-fashioned performers were speaking. There were no quick soundbites and the argument took time more than an hour. This was a debate whose style and tone would not have been out of place a century ago.

Malcolm Rifkind, the new Foreign Secretary, and Robin Cook, his Labour Shadow, are both comparatively young men. But they are classic, traditional parliamentary performers of the highest calibre.

To watch the tall, thin,



MATTHEW PARRIS

POLITICAL SKETCH

bespectacled and scholarly Mr Rifkind prosecuting his case in that educated Edinburgh accent of his; and to hear another Scot, the sharp-faced, quick-minded Robin Cook, proclaiming his moral horror, beard a-wag, from the political pulpit, his finger jabbing out the argument and his voice gravelly with accusation... is to be reminded that there is more to British politics than Prime

Minister's Questions. Both spoke well, debating the foreign policy part of the Queen's Speech.

The new Foreign Secretary seems to have picked up the old Foreign Secretary's baton and carried on running without a stumble.

He is sharp-toothed and dominantly pugilistic, less magisterial than Douglas Hurd but a high-octane performer. Rifkind is rather like

Donald Dewar on pep-pills. Yesterday he spoke largely without a text in front of him was a scattering of blue-crested Foreign Office note-papers, with a few sparse ink notes.

His aim, after a tour d'horizon of world affairs, was to press against the Opposition the charge of inconsistency and, on Europe, abdication. The Foreign Secretary pursued this with skill, but by making Labour policy his centrepiece he risked sounding like a Shadow Foreign Secretary, criticising the incumbent. He levelled some fairly personal charges

against Mr Cook. That gave Cook the opportunity he loves to sound like the incumbent.

Rolling his eyes heavenward as though pestered by some stripling, he declined to enter the fray. Instead, in sub-Churchillian style and glancing down at his own notes written in cursive script across red crested Commons notepaper, Mr Cook roamed the globe, pronouncing in statesmanlike manner upon the great issues of the day.

"I invite Congress to reflect..." he began (criticising US Congressmen's stance on Bosnia). "They have to recog-

nise..." he continued (deploring the attitudes of Balkan leaders). "The nation will expect..." Cook growled (of the Scott report). "Those of us who care for the Commonwealth..." — this last more in sorrow than in anger.

That much of the opposition policy he is obliged to defend contrasts starkly with his own past opinions only made his confident style and contemptuous dismissal of frustrated Tory interrupters the more remarkable.

Robin Cook is now easily the most masterful parliamentarian on Labour's front bench.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Victim of 'IRA' beating hunted

Police on both sides of the Irish border were yesterday searching for a man who was abducted by suspected IRA terrorists after being beaten about the head with hammers.

Five masked men had grabbed John Hegarty, 19, from his girlfriend's house on a nationalist housing estate in Strabane, Co Tyrone, shortly after midnight. The attack, which came hours after John Major condemned IRA punishment beatings, was described by the RUC as "particularly savage".

Mr Major remained adamant yesterday that he would not back down on his demands for decommissioning of terrorist weapons.

Divorce Bill will have free vote

The Government yesterday published its Family Law Bill containing the controversial shake-up of divorce laws. But the Prime Minister moved to defuse opposition to the Bill, which is criticised by some of the Tory right as undermining family values, by promising a free vote.

Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, also indicated his support for the measures, which he has fought a hard battle to retain in the legislative programme.

Lord Mackay, page 21

Trust payout

An NHS trust is to pay more than £500,000, mostly pension contributions, to its former chief executive who was asked to retire early over concerns about performance. John O'Brien, who held the post less than a year, quit Cheviot and Wansbeck Trust in Ashington, Northumberland, in March.

Twin boy dies

One of the Siamese twin boys born in London seven days ago to Kuwaiti parents has died during an operation to separate them. The boy was joined from the breastbone to the navel. The other twin was in intensive care at Great Ormond Street hospital, London, last night.

Trap for thieves

Genetic testing will be stepped up to curb wildlife thieves. DNA analysis helps to convict illegal traders by proving which animals were bred in captivity. Police forces will be issued with sampling packs and research will try to extend the tests from blood to feathers and fur.

Prostate advance

Scientists at Bartholomew's Hospital, London, have developed a test for prostate cancer, a disease that kills 9,500 men a year. The blood test predicted four out of five men who went on to develop the cancer. Researchers believe the test could detect high risk cases up to ten years in advance.

Naomi: four held

Four people were being questioned last night about the murder of Naomi Smith, 15, who was sexually assaulted and stabbed on a recreation ground near her home in Anley Common, Warwickshire, on September 14. Police have been doing DNA tests on 800 young men in the area.

The Times

The Times is to increase its cover price by 5p to 30p from Monday. The paper's Saturday edition will go up from 35p to 40p. The Daily Telegraph is expected to follow suit and raise its weekday price by 5p to 40p.

Top Tory attacks education policies

By Philip Webster
POLITICAL EDITOR

A SENIOR Tory MP embarrassed the Government last night by criticising its education policies. Sir Malcolm Thurnham, chairman of the all-party Education Select Committee, attacked government plans to increase the borrowing powers of grant-maintained schools.

He also said the proposals to introduce vouchers for nursery places for four-year-olds would not work without increased funding. Sir Malcolm backed the role of local education authorities, even though the Prime Minister has indicated his long-term aim of encouraging all schools to opt out.

Sir Malcolm insisted that local education authorities had vital roles providing back-up services that schools would otherwise have to find for themselves. "I would not pretend that LEAs in the past haven't done some strange things. Governments do strange things too, so politics intrude at every level in education," he told ITN. "But the way the system has evolved, LEAs have had to re-evaluate what they are doing and, while there will still be some extreme examples, I believe the vast majority of education authorities have adjusted."

Education, page 41

Franchises can run full seven years

Labour government 'will not take back privatised trains'

By Jonathan Prynn
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

A LABOUR government would not bring privatised rail passenger franchises back into public ownership immediately after an election victory. Instead, they would be allowed to run the length of their seven-year contracts.

In a letter yesterday to one of the private groups bidding for BR services, Brian Wilson, Labour's transport spokesman, made it clear that franchises already sold would be allowed to run their course. The decision is certain to cause a storm among the main rail unions, which have been urging Tony Blair to renationalise the whole of BR immediately after he comes to power.

In his letter, Mr Wilson warned operators that they would be expected "to adhere strictly" to the terms of contracts, which a Labour government might tighten up by law. He said: "We will lay stress on the absolute priority of safety and of running a reliable service within the previously agreed levels of financial support, focusing on the needs of your passengers and the welfare of your staff."

The policy will put Mr Blair



Wilson: risking a row with the rail unions

on a collision course with the unions and the Labour Left. Lew Adams, the general secretary of Aslef, the train drivers' union, insisted last night: "Our position is that we want to see the parts of British Rail that have been sold off brought back under public ownership as rapidly as possible."

With seven of the 25 franchises already up for sale and four more well advanced in their preparation, it seems likely that more than half the network will be in private

hands by the next general election, including almost all the prestigious InterCity services.

Mr Blair has previously been prepared to commit the party to "a publicly owned, publicly accountable railway" without specifying any of the detail of how that would be done in practice. However, he has refused to make any "open chequebook" commitments to renationalisation because of the huge cost involved and the massive legal complications.

The letter exposes Labour's strategy of trying to kill off privatisation before it happens by undermining investor confidence in the process.

In the letter, Mr Wilson said that contracts with private operators would not be renewed when they reached the end of their lives, making it at least seven years after the election before rail services are brought back under public ownership, although no others would be sold.

However, he gave warning that he could not rule out primary legislation to change the terms of private operators' contracts and that no compensation would be available to companies that pulled out of their franchises as a result.



Shah, left, and MacArthur with dummy issues of *Today* weeks before launch

Newspaper goes down with all guns blazing

By Brian MacArthur, founding editor of *Today*

AT *TODAY* ten years ago we thought we were going to change the world — and we almost did, except that we were pipped at the post by Rupert Murdoch when he moved *The Sun*, *The Times*, *The Sunday Times* and the *News of the World* to Wapping in January 1986, shed 5,500 print workers, and kick-started the Fleet Street revolution.

Nine years later all but four of the 21 national newspapers are published east of Blackfriars and there are no national newspapers left in Fleet Street. Nor can I remember when the production of a national newspaper was last disrupted by a printing union.

So Eddy Shah, who founded *Today*, deserves his reputation in the history of Fleet Street, as do the journalists who struggled night and day to keep the infant newspaper afloat after the disastrous

launch in March 1986 and the editors since then who kept the flame alive. Yet Shah's main contribution to the Fleet Street revolution was not *Today* but the outstanding courage he showed when the National Graphical Association, then the most militant of the print unions, tried to stop production of his obscure chain of free newspapers published from Warrington.

Where the powerful proprietors of Fleet Street had constantly failed, Shah showed, by taking them to the courts and resisting this intimidation, that the print unions were not invincible. It was a hugely significant psychological victory in the debilitating battle between managements and unions — a victory that turned Shah's thoughts to starting a national newspaper and persuaded Rupert Murdoch to advance his plans to move to Wapping.

There were other triumphs, too. Each of Shah's main aims for *Today*, so derided by its rivals nine years ago, are now taken for granted — the use of electronic technology and colour photographs, simultaneous printing at satellite plants around Britain, a reduction in the power of unions, and distribution by road instead of rail. As a result, life for journalists has been transformed. So have the newspapers that readers buy — they are bigger, brighter and, mostly, more profitable.

As *Today* went down yesterday, still with all guns blazing, a paper that could hold its head high under the editorship of Richard Stott, it was closer to the ideals of the journalists who founded it than at any time since 1987.

The author is now Associate Editor of *The Times*.

Losses force closure of Today

Continued from page 1

flashing plans. Nor was there "a credible purchaser for the paper."

Since News International bought *Today* in 1987 for £38 million, the company has invested an estimated £147 million into it, without any signs of its becoming profitable.

"Scores of millions of pounds have been poured into the paper for editorial and promotion during the past eight years without the necessary result. With newsprint costs running 50 per cent

higher and rising we had to take decisive action," Mr Hinton said.

Mr Shah was bound for Florida last night and could not be contacted.

Although *Today*, which started with a circulation of 300,000, has never been a financial success, it is widely regarded as having been a catalyst for the national press. Through *Today* Mr Shah, who owned a string of free weekly papers in Warrington, introduced into Fleet Street the electronic technology and col-

our photographs now used by all national papers. He also began the process of simultaneous printing at satellite plants around Britain.

In June 1986, it was sold for £10 million to Lomro, then owners of *The Observer*, who injected £10 million. Lomro, however, found the losses too severe and was preparing to sell the paper to Robert Maxwell, former owner of Mirror Group Newspapers, when Rupert Murdoch, chairman and chief executive of News International stepped in.

Cars used more for short journeys

By Jonathan Prynn, Transport Correspondent

BRITAIN'S clogged roads are being increasingly filled by drivers using the car for journeys of less than half a mile even though in most cases it would be quicker to walk.

A survey of travelling habits commissioned by the RAC has painted an alarming picture of a nation ever more dependent on cars, while walking and cycling as a means of transport go into steep decline. The explosive growth in the use of cars for shopping and the increase in children who are driven to school, parties and to meet friends means the proportion of short journeys taken by car has nearly doubled in 20 years.

David Worslett, the RAC's director of public affairs, said: "It seems that if there are

children in your life you turn into a glorified taxi service." The figures will alarm Sir George Young, who is known to be deeply worried about the growth in car use for short journeys. Even 30 per cent of non-car owners in the survey agreed that their personal use of cars was too convenient to be given up "for the sake of the environment".

The survey of more than 300 British households found that 7 per cent of trips of under half a mile are made by car compared with less than 4 per cent in the mid-1970s.

Walking, at 90.7 per cent, still dominates but has fallen from 93.3 per cent, in spite of warnings about the environmental damage caused by driving and the health benefits of walking. The proportion of journeys between half

a mile and a mile taken by car has risen from 14.7 to 24.1 per cent. The survey, carried out by the Transport Studies Unit of the Economic and Social Research Council of Oxford University, found that although drivers realised the absurdity of using the car for such short journeys they were effectively "addicted" to driving.

The use of cars for very short journeys reflects "the growth of habit or unthinking, almost automatic use of cars rather than careful choice", the report said.

The findings match those of the official British Transport Statistics published last month, which concluded that the distance walked in a year by the average Briton fell during the early 1990s to below 200 miles for the first

time ever. The drop was particularly marked among young people.

Paddy Ashdown highlighted the benefits of a £3 daily commuting charge for London motorists yesterday when he outlined radical plans to reduce congestion, pollution and journey times in the capital.

The Liberal Democrat leader demanded far-reaching changes to London's transport policy, centred on charges for car drivers and greater investment in public transport. Mr Ashdown defined his party's commitment to the principle of road pricing under which motorists pay, using an electronic charging system, to drive in traffic-congested areas.

Leading article, page 21

سكرا من الاصل

My parents are proud of me, says dry cleaner's daughter accused over attack on Tory chairman

Mawhinney paint girls celebrate an A level in protest

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

THREE students accused of throwing paint at Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, were enjoying their fame yesterday at the college where two are studying for A levels.

Karen Doyle and Naveed Malik, both 18, and their friend Amanda Egbe, 20, were surrounded by students congratulating them in the canteen at the Kingsway college for further education in Islington, north London.

They claimed that members of the public had been ringing the college to pledge support.

The three are members of a small socialist group calling itself the Revolutionary Fighters. They said they had decided to take action when they realised that friends at the predominantly black college may be affected by proposed new legislation for tighter immigration controls.

Miss Malik is in her third year at the college. Her parents, who own a dry cleaners in Islington, were very proud of her, she said.

"When they came to pick me up from the police station they were really proud, although

they don't feel as strongly about this as I do," she said.

"I feel really enthusiastic about what's been happening and we all have a lot of energy to carry on with our campaign."

Miss Egbe, a former students' union president at the college and now a second-year philosophy student at the University of North London, said: "This Bill is asking people to be racist. People will be forced to snoop on their neighbours and their work colleagues and look at the colour of their skin. We all feel very angry and had to do something about it."

Her mother, a nurse in Tottenham, is Nigerian. Miss Egbe has been brought up in London and lives in Hackney where she shares a house with other students. She said her mother had been initially alarmed when she saw her daughter's photograph in the newspapers.

"At first she was concerned but because she's from Nigeria she understands what I'm fighting for. She just told me to be careful."

Miss Doyle said that her mother, a pub landlady, had told her that she was a "silly billy" but also supported her.



Alan Duncan, Mr Mawhinney's aide, with the students as he attempted to make a citizen's arrest



Naveed Malik, left, with Amanda Egbe in the Kingsway canteen and, right, Karen Doyle. They call their group the Revolutionary Fighters

She lives in Camden but spends much of her time working in the student's union at Kingsway. "I think my parents were quite surprised but they would always want to be there for me. They are concerned as obviously parents are but they appreciate that this is important to me," she said.

Together with Nick DeMarco, 28, a committed

Marxist studying A levels in philosophy and history at Kingsway, the girls founded Campaign for Justice, an anti-racist organisation, two months ago.

Mr DeMarco, the son of a Lambeth council architect, studied at the private Latimer School in Hammersmith, west London, and left at 16 with four O levels, then dropped out of a college in Richmond to

help in the miners' strike. He has been at Kingsway for three years and, because he studies for less than 16 hours a week, he claims income support.

Mr DeMarco admitted admiration for the poll tax rioters but claimed that the Revolutionary Fighters and Movement for Justice supporters preferred non-direct action. He admits to radicalising the

college and enforcing a no-go policy for police. "If the police try to come in to arrest someone, we get all the students we can down to block them and generally make life difficult for them."

The girls were arrested on Wednesday night after the incident on College Green, Westminster, and have been released on bail until January. □ MPs have called for a

review of security around College Green. Dame Jill Knight, Tory MP for Edgbaston, asked Tony Newton, Leader of the House, to look into the security of MPs "persuading their perfectly legal duties in talking to the media on College Green".

Mr Newton said: "It would be right to give some consideration to the arrangements in light of what happened."

Gagged husband 'would have died'

By A STAFF REPORTER

DETECTIVES investigating the murder of a building society manageress became suspicious about her husband's story of an ambush by robbers when medical experts proved he could not have been unconscious and remained gagged for 16 hours without choking on his tongue, a court was told yesterday.

Oxford Crown Court was told that Gordon Wardell, 42, told police that he returned home from a public house to find his wife being held hostage by a gang, with one of the raiders wearing a clown mask and holding a knife against her throat. Mr Wardell, of Meriden, Warwickshire, denies murdering his wife, Carol, 39, at the couple's home on September 11 last year.

The prosecution alleges that Mr Wardell suffocated his wife at home before dumping her body in a local lay-by and going to her building society branch, where he used her keys to break in and fake a raid.

Richard Wakerley, QC, for the prosecution, said detectives found Mr Wardell bound, gagged and beaten on the lounge floor, claiming he and his wife had been the victims of a ruthless gang.

Mr Wakerley said Mr Wardell's claims were almost impossible. "There is no question that any of the blows he received had knocked him out. If you eliminate the blows, could it have been an anaesthetic? An expert will tell you that such a story of unconsciousness is simply incredible," he said.

"It is impossible to maintain somebody unconscious more than a few minutes. Their tongue will go to the back of their throat and they will die if an airway is not maintained." The trial continues.

Put aside every prejudice, judge tells West jury

By RICHARD DUCE

A JUDGE warned jurors in the trial of Rosemary West yesterday that they would need cool heads, putting aside prejudice and sentiment, in deciding whether she is guilty of the murders.

Mr Justice Mantell told the four women and seven men: "No one can pretend otherwise than that you have a heavy responsibility." He said the case against Mrs West, 41, was "sensational" and had been surrounded by considerable media interest.

In his summing up at Winchester Crown Court the judge warned them: "Resist external voices which massive publicity is capable of bringing to bear. Put aside all prejudice and all sentiment. Cool heads are needed."

Mrs West denies ten charges of murder including that of her daughter Heather, 16. All but one of the alleged victims were found beneath the home of Mrs West and her husband Frederick at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester.

The prosecution claims the Wests acted jointly in luring many of the victims back to

the house where they were sexually assaulted, murdered and dismembered before burial. The judge told the jury that it was for the prosecution to prove Mrs West had been involved. It was not for Mrs West to prove her innocence.

He said it was not necessary to prove Mrs West struck the fatal blow but that she had participated in a joint plan with her husband to render them helpless before they were abused and killed. "For Rosemary West to be guilty, the prosecution has to make you sure first that she either alone or jointly with someone else, for example Frederick West, participated in killing the person named in the charge."

"Secondly, you have to be sure that what she did was both deliberate and was unlawful. Thirdly, you have to be sure that in doing what she did Rosemary West intended that the person named in the charge should be killed or at least should suffer some serious bodily harm."

The judge advised the jury that each murder charge carried with it an alternative of manslaughter. "That verdict could be returned if any 'sober and reasonable person' felt there had been only an intention to do some harm."

The judge then began to detail the evidence of witnesses during the 27-day trial. He said a number of witnesses had entered into contracts with the media for their stories. "Whatever you think, it's a fact of life, it happens."

He asked: "Does it compromise them? Does it render their evidence valueless?" The jury might think it was important only if the information given to the press differed from what was said to them from the witness box, he said. The trial continues.



Mantell told jurors of heavy responsibility

Interview with Princess makes BBC a royal mint

By ANDREW PIERCE

WORLDWIDE sales of the *Panorama* interview with the Princess of Wales will earn the BBC a record £15 million for a factual programme.

Broadcasters have clamoured for the rights to the interview, which is the BBC's biggest global bestseller since the sale of *Thatcher, the Downing Street Years*.

Martin Bashir, the reporter who interviewed the Princess, came out of hiding yesterday to defend the decision not to tell Buckingham Palace. The Princess has made clear through friends that her remarks will not damage the monarchy.

Mr Bashir, 32, who an-

swered questions for ten minutes under tight BBC security, confirmed the worst fears of the Palace when he made clear that the Princess had not been treated sympathetically. No specific questions had been issued in advance. "If there was any kind of preferential treatment we would be subject to enormous criticism," he said.

BBC Worldwide Television said that sales of the film would break all records for a factual programme. ABC, the American television network, is to pay £642,000.

Mr Bashir denied that an intermediary had arranged the interview. He also reiterated that the programme had originally been conceived as

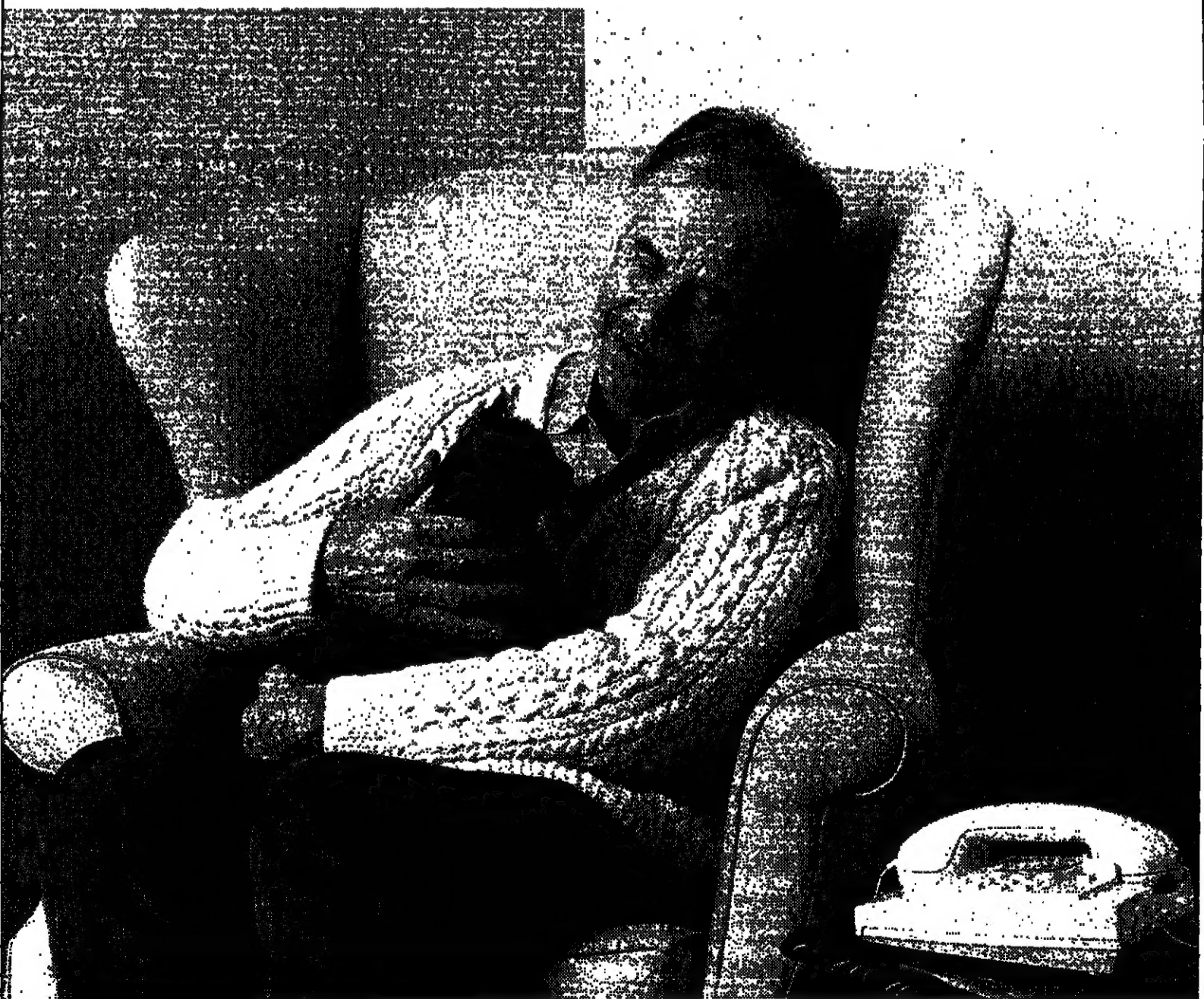
an examination of the changing role of the monarchy.

He refused to say if he approached the Princess directly but denied she had sought the interview. Pressed on whether the request was put directly to her by the BBC, he replied: "We use first-hand sources don't we, if we can? ... well, in the end an invitation was put to the Princess."

□ The Prince of Wales launches two new Single Gloucester cheeses today, one with herbs and the other with garlic and herbs. They are made by traditional methods, using unpasteurised organic West Country milk.

Valerie Grove, page 18
Letters, page 21

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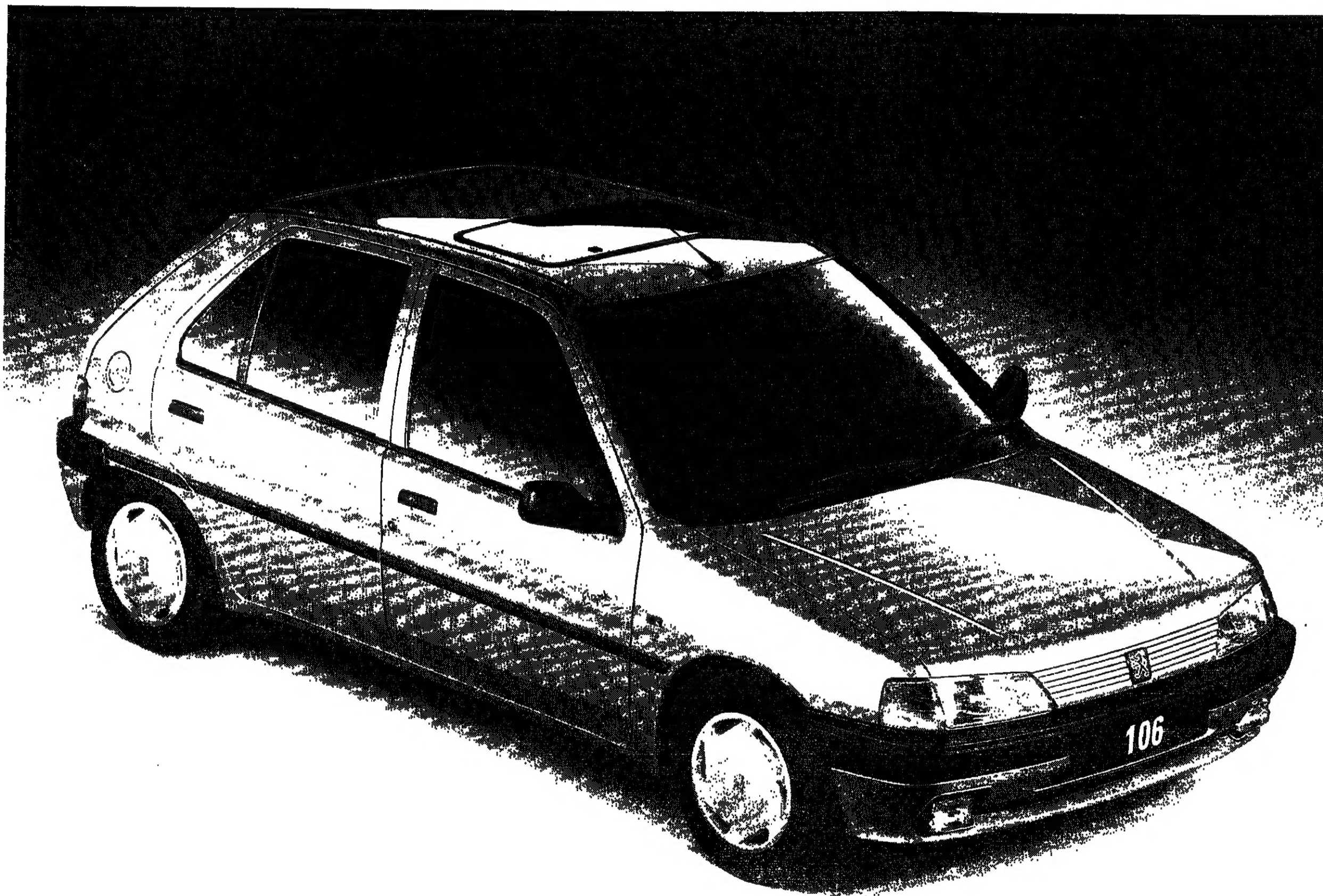
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Grieving parents tell how 18-year-old drug victim had wanted to save lives through transplants

'Leah is dead but it is bearable because she can help others'

BY MICHAEL HORNSWELL

LEAH BETTS died yesterday, four days after slipping into a coma at her 18th birthday party when she took an Ecstasy tablet. The A-level student's wish to give life to others was honoured when her distraught parents told doctors they could remove her organs for transplant.

Paul Betts, Leah's father, hopes her death may also save lives by convincing other teenagers about the dangers of drugs. Among hundreds of messages of support have been letters from youngsters who said that they were giving up drugs after seeing pictures of Leah on life-support.

Mr Betts, 49, said: "I suppose I have got some good from the bad. It has been horrendous, but the thought of Leah living on in some way and helping others has made it much more bearable."

His memories of his daughter ran the length of her brief lifetime, from bouncing her on his knee to seeing her run down the hall last Saturday night dressed in her party clothes, asking "How do I look?" Mr Betts said: "She looked so beautiful."

Chris Minett, chief executive at Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford, Essex, said that two independent doctors had pronounced Leah dead in the early hours after brain scans. With the permission of her



Leah Betts: in coma since 18th birthday

ambulance arrived at their home in Latchingdon, Essex.

Holding back tears, Mr Betts said: "One comforting thing is that she probably died in my arms at her 18th birthday party. It was purely the fact that Jan and I were doing resuscitation that kept her body and her organs operative until she got to the hospital."

The couple have received letters, cards, telephone calls and the support of prayer from people all over the country. Mr Betts said he had to overcome a personal fear to allow the organ donations.

"I had a fear of her being cut, even after she was dead. For me to think that my daughter had that done gave me great anguish. It would have been so easy to say, 'Leave her alone, she has suffered enough'. But I have respected her wishes."

Mr Betts said that having survived a "living hell" he would consider how he might be able to help others with drug problems.

Mrs Betts, 46, a nurse who lectures in schools about drug-taking, offered a message to people tempted by them. She said: "I could lecture you like a mother until I am blue in the face, but the only people who can prevent this happening again are yourselves. Remember the tablet that Leah took was pure. If you refuse to take



Paul and Janet Betts yesterday: among their memories was Leah looking "so beautiful" as she came downstairs for her weekend party

any type of drugs, tragedies like this will cease and the pushers will go out of business.

"Then there will be no necessity for people to sit around discussing the virtues of legalising drugs. To people who say it was her own fault, she took it, you're right. But drugs should not be available in the first place and when they are the peer pressure should be to refuse."

As police continued their inquiry into the supply of Leah's Ecstasy tablet, Mr Betts urged anyone with information to come forward. He said: "The hatred I have got is welling up inside, not only as a father but as an ex-police

officer. I would truly love to see that bastard behind bars."

"I think there has got to be a radical change in the way people are dealt with. There are many factors taken into account before a person gets to court."

"Is it in the public interest? Is it worth the money? What amount of drugs is involved? Were they for the person's own use or were they to be passed on?"

"By the time you have gone through that list, you have got so tied up you have forgotten what you are dealing with in the first place. I do believe that if a sentence is passed it should be kept."

Six people have been

arrested after raids in the Basildon area. The tablet is believed to have been bought at a club. Police said two 19-year-old men had been bailed after being charged with possessing a controlled drug with intent to supply, but detectives said they were unrelated to the £10 tablet that Leah took. Another youth was released on bail pending analysis of substances and two were released without charge.

Police are still trying to trace a woman who told them that on Friday night she and a friend saw a man supply Ecstasy tablets in Basildon similar to the one that killed Leah. She telephoned police but would not give her name.

Schoolboys seriously ill after drug-taking

TWO 15-year-old boys were seriously ill in hospital yesterday after taking Ecstasy at home. Their mothers had discovered them stumbling about in a confused state on Wednesday night.

Police believe that the incidents are related. The boys, both from Leigh Park, Havant, Hampshire, might have taken other amphetamines and cannabis as well as Ecstasy. One was in

a stable condition in intensive care and the other was in a satisfactory condition on a general medical ward.

Detective Sergeant Nigel Midgley said Portsmouth was "the Ecstasy capital of Britain" and added: "If we are not careful we could have ten Leah Betts tragedies every week." Up to 25,000 Ecstasy tablets were being sold in the Portsmouth area each week.

Dangers will not make us change our habit, say Ecstasy users



The rave scene continues unabated in spite of Leah Betts's death

BY THOM DIBDIN

ECSTASY users in the pubs and clubs of Glasgow said that the death of Leah Betts would not affect the way they took the drug. If they were using less Ecstasy than before, it was because of the effectiveness of Operation Eagle, an anti-drugs drive by Strathclyde Police, not the tragedy of a young woman.

"Leah's case is obviously very tragic," said Tony, who was out for a drink in a city centre bar. "She took pure E with an apple print on it, but I've taken pure E

with an apple print on it before, and I've had a very good night on it."

He and his companions, Sarah and Pauline, were happy to talk freely about their Ecstasy use as long as I did not disclose their real names. Sarah even offered to try to buy a tablet of Ecstasy for me, as I was intending to go on to visit a club.

She took me over to a pleasant, well-spoken young man sitting with a group of people in the corner of the bar. He apologised that he did not have any, but it was midweek and the torrential

rain was keeping most people at home. If I cared to come back tomorrow I could have a tablet for £15.

Back at their table, Sarah and her friends said that they were most concerned about the safety of clubs and the failure of the media to use Leah's death to explain to Ecstasy users the dangers of heatstroke and contaminated Ecstasy.

"My understanding of most of the deaths from Ecstasy is they've been as a result of overheating because clubs won't provide free water," Sarah said.

"It is irresponsible with all this coverage that they [the media] are not using the time to talk about how to use E safely — about chilling out and drinking water."

At the club, a weekly event called "chopper" playing chart-orientated house music for a mainly student clientele, a few people had obviously taken Ecstasy. They were the ones going round with big grins and hugging each other with friendly affection. Most other people were swilling back the beer on promotion. Any physical contact

was of a purely sexual nature. When he discovered that I was from the press, John, who had not taken any Ecstasy that night and was drinking cola because he was driving, was keen to give me his opinion.

"I am just annoyed about the way the press portray Ecstasy use," he said. "My girlfriend and I have nine-to-five jobs. We are normal citizens. We do everything normal. We take E as a recreational drug during the weekend because we want to and because it is fun. We are not criminals."

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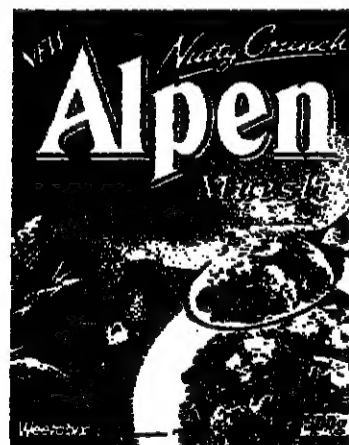
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Rural lot
at theme



PERIOD
TIMING



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Countryside Movement plans to educate townies

Rural lobby takes aim at 'theme park Britain'

By MICHAEL HORNSEY, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

A PRESSURE group was launched yesterday to counter what its promoters see as the growing hostility towards rural life by an urban population ignorant of the realities of the countryside.

Sir David Steel, the former Liberal Party leader, is to be the Countryside Movement's executive chairman. He said it would aim to promote every aspect of the country — not merely the defence of hunting, shooting, fishing and other traditional pursuits.

The movement has the support of the National Farmers' Union, the Country Landowners' Association, the National Federation of Anglers and the British Field Sports Society. However, the Ramblers' Association is opposed to it and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is uncommitted.

The launch coincides with the increasing likelihood of a Labour government pushing for a ban on hunting, giving greater public access to pri-

uate estates and reducing the cruelty of factory farming.

Sir David, MP for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, said in London: "Not all our constituents support hunting. I myself do not approve of hunting. It is a minority pastime. But I do not want to stop people hunting, because I recognise the contribution it makes to the rural economy."

A glossy brochure, *Our Charter*, says the movement intends to become "a powerful, persuasive, determined voice for the countryside heard by Westminster, Whitehall, Brussels, the media and the public".

The charter says the movement will work to combat "the growth of a profoundly unsympathetic faction which seems to have no understanding of country people and the things for which they stand."

Their vision is apparently a sanitised countryside, devoid of life as well as death — a theme park for which the

urban dweller takes no responsibility, financial or otherwise, but through which he expects to wander freely."

The charter also laments the fact that rural interests command much greater electoral influence in other European countries. In Britain, it says, "all three major political parties are urban dominated. The countryside has in effect become disenfranchised. It needs a campaigning voice."

A series of advertisements in national newspapers, starting today, will praise the role of farmers, landowners and field sports enthusiasts in conserving the countryside and its wildlife. They will also highlight public ignorance about the countryside.

Much of the funding for the movement is expected to come from the Countryside Business Group, launched earlier this year, which hopes to generate about £5 million a year by persuading saddlers, gun-makers, fishing tackle

providers and other businesses with an interest in the countryside to contribute 1.5 per cent of their turnover annually. It is also proposing a voluntary national game levy, under which salmon anglers would pay £3 a day to the defence of country sports, coarse anglers 30p a day and shoots 27p a pheasant.

The business group was the brainchild of Eric Bettelheim, a barrister based in London who is fond of shooting, and the Countryside Movement is hoping for "substantial" financial support from it.

Sir David will have a 14-member board of directors. They include the Duke of Westminster, one of Britain's biggest landowners, Robin Hanbury-Tenison, chief executive of the British Field Sports Society and Frederick Forsyth, novelist and shooting and angling enthusiast.

Magnus Linklater, page 20
Leading article, page 21



Sir David Steel is executive chairman of the newly launched pressure group

NEXT WEEK IN THE TIMES



Starting on Monday, the five-day series no parent can afford to miss: a complete guide to getting the best education for your child. Every day next week *The Times* studies what makes a school succeed or fail and, on Tuesday, publishes the full league table of secondary schools in a special 20-page supplement.

THE CAMPAIGN LEADERS

Sir David Steel, a former Liberal Party leader and MP for the rural constituency of Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale in Scotland since 1983, is a keen angler. He does not hunt but opposes any move to ban the sport. Says he personally disapproves of hunting but defends the right of the minority who hunt to continue to do so. He will step down as an MP at the next election and will work two and a half days a week for the Countryside Movement for an undisclosed fee.



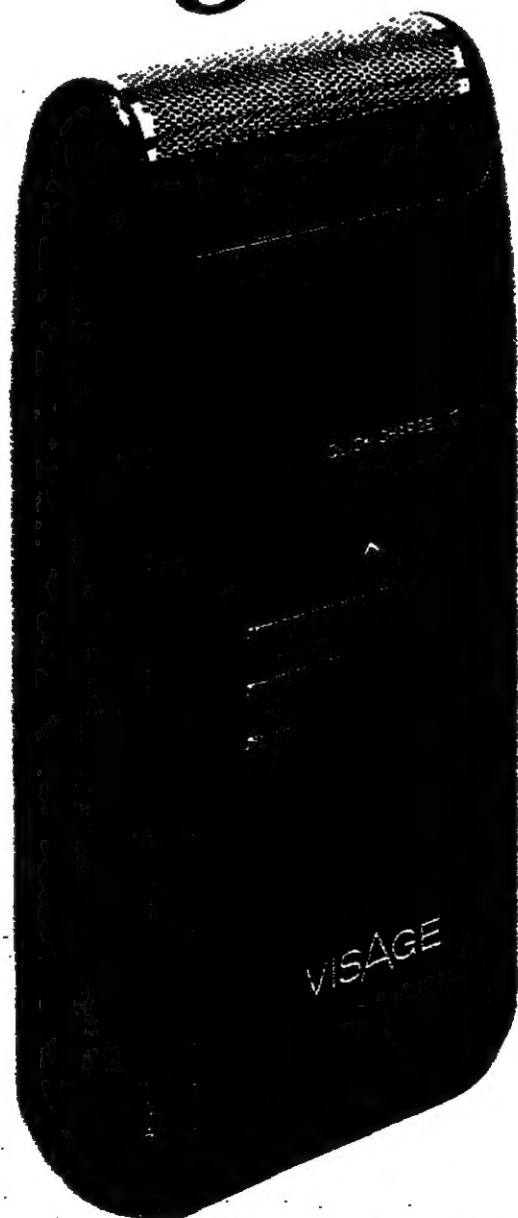
Robin Hanbury-Tenison, left, distinguished explorer and campaigner for the preservation of the rainforest. Appointed chief executive of the British Field Sports Society earlier this year in a move calculated to win back public support for hunting. Contends that properly regulated field sports are not cruel and help to conserve the countryside. He fishes occasionally and shoots pheasant and woodcock on his 1,000-acre estate near Bodmin, Cornwall.

Eric Bettelheim is an Anglophile barrister of American origin. The Countryside Business Group is regarded as his brainchild. He believes that gun-makers, saddlers, fishing tackle providers, hoteliers and other businesses with rural interests should contribute a proportion of turnover to a campaign to prevent the countryside becoming "a giant theme park". He fishes and co-manages a large Wiltshire shoot.

The Duke of Westminster, right, one of Britain's biggest landowners, is a member of dozens of countryside bodies and has expressed particular concern about the pressures on farming life and the high level of suicide among farmers and their wives. Involved in long-running dispute with Ramblers' Association over access to Abbotswood, his 19,500-acre estate in Lancashire, has allowed partial access subject to conditions designed to protect wildlife.



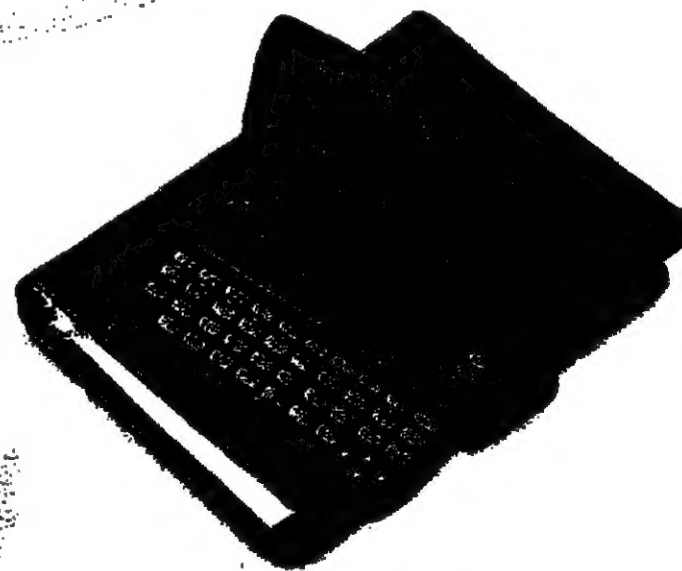
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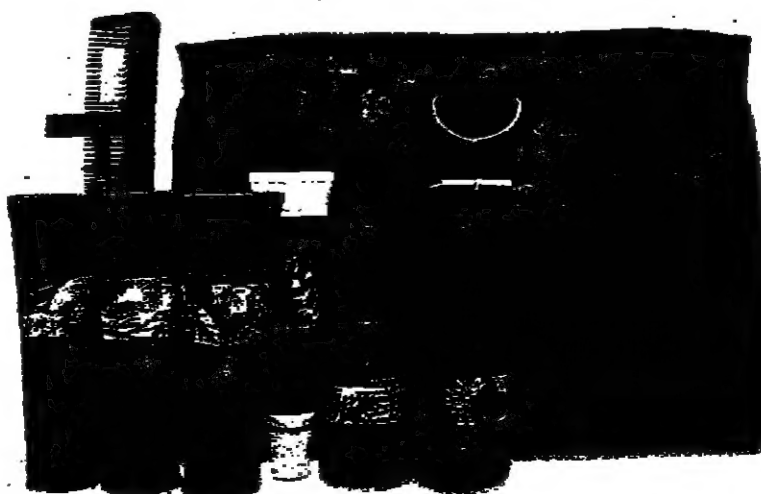
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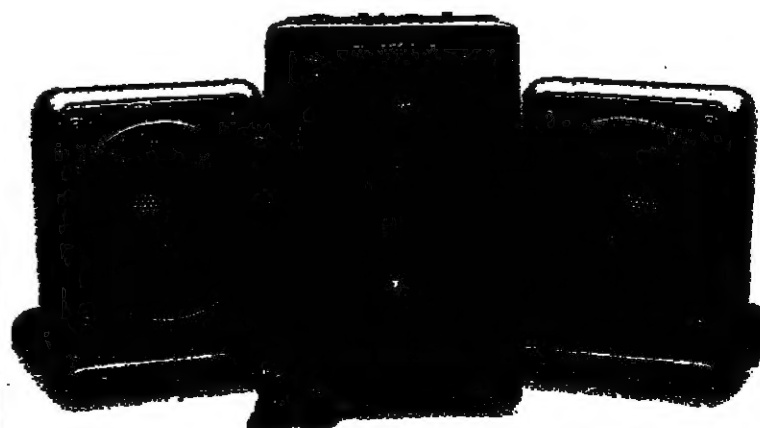


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'If she looks you in the eye and says she wants the operation, I think most people would jump to it'

Queen Mother's age 'irrelevant' in hip operation

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
AND EMMA WILKINS

AGE is irrelevant for a 95-year-old facing surgery, provided he or she is fit and able to benefit from the operation, surgeons say. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother is not the oldest person to have had a hip replacement, but the operation is not common in the over-90s.

Alan Lettin, vice-president of the Royal College of Surgeons and a specialist in joint replacement, said: "The Queen Mother is clearly a very active woman for her age and will clearly be able to benefit. If her medical advisers considered her fit, her age is a complete irrelevance."

The Queen Mother is likely to be having physiotherapy every couple of hours to keep her limbs and circulation moving while she is lying in bed. She may be up and taking her first steps within 48 hours. Early mobilisation is essential for older people whose joints stiffen and muscles become wasted rapidly if they lie in bed. She is expected to spend two weeks in hospital but it is likely to be three months before she is ready to appear in public.

"Her progress may be a little slower than average. If I were in her position I wouldn't want to be rushed," Mr Lettin, past president of

The hip replacement operation was pioneered in the 1950s but did not become routine until the 1970s. Its earliest exponents were John Charnley in Manchester and Ken McKee in Norwich. About 50,000 a year are performed in Britain. Most prostheses are made of stainless steel or cobalt chrome alloy but surgeons are experimenting with other materials including titanium. The operation costs £3,000 to £4,000 on the NHS and £5,000 to £10,000 privately.

the British Orthopaedic Association, said.

The operation on the Queen Mother — total hip replacement — involved replacing both sides of the diseased right hip joint with a metal and plastic substitute.

Her surgeon, Roger Vickers, is likely to have used a standard Charnley joint, designed by Sir John Charnley 30 years ago. It comprises a stainless steel shaft with metallic ball that is cemented into the femur and a plastic socket that is glued into the pelvis. A coarse file is used to cut a shaft in the femur and the steel prosthesis is fixed in place with a special acrylic cement. The ball is placed in the new socket and

the muscles and tendons repaired before the incision is closed.

The Queen Mother will almost certainly have been given anti-coagulant drugs to reduce the risk of blood clots. There is a 90 per cent chance that the pain she has experienced in recent months will be completely relieved.

John King, of the Royal London Hospital, said elderly patients underwent such operations only when their lifestyles made it absolutely necessary.

"Most 80-year-olds who are suffering hip pain would simply undertake to do less and lead a quieter lifestyle," he said. "In this case you have a determined lady who has said that the pain is simply stopping her doing all the things that she regards as essential. If she looks you in the eye and says she wants the operation, then I think most people would jump to it."

When other patients return home, Mr King recommends that an occupational therapist visit their home. It is extremely important to make sure that the hip is not bent too much in the early weeks.

"Usually I would recommend that someone goes round to the house and makes sure that the loo seat is raised and that the patient has a chair heightened."

The chief problem with hip replacements is that they do not last for ever. Increasing numbers of patients are having to return for repeat operations because the shaft inserted into the femur has worked loose. Surgeons are experimenting with new designs of prostheses that depend on the bone regrowing into the surface.

Mr Lettin said: "A patient the other day was starting to have problems after 20 years. I don't think this will be a problem for the Queen Mother unless she is jolly well looked after by the Almighty."

Hip operation, page 1



The Queen Mother at the Abbey last week for the remembrance service

Talent upheld by fortitude for pleasing the crowds

BY ALAN HAMILTON

LAST Thursday the Queen Mother walked 20 yards from her car to a field of poppies set in the grass of the Westminster Abbey precincts. It was a slow progress, undertaken with difficulty, obvious discomfort and with the aid of two sticks.

Whether she would turn up at all was uncertain until an hour beforehand. But, in this 50th anniversary year of the end of the Second World War, it was an occasion that the Queen Consort of the Blitz years was determined not to miss.

The indication that all was

not well was when she came to plant her own poppy. In taking three steps forward she had to be helped by the Very Rev Michael Mayne, Dean of Westminster, supporting her left arm. She had great difficulty in bending down to place the small wooden cross in the ground, and had to be assisted by the Duke of York, who stood by her right side. It was with obvious relief that she climbed into her chauffeur-driven golf buggy.

The Queen Mother has not stood for any length of time in public since St Patrick's Day in March 1994, when on the windy expanse of Chelsea

Barracks parade ground she endured an upstanding hour of handshakes and shamrock distribution to the Irish Guards. On her birthday in August last year, she managed a 45-minute walkabout of great fortitude outside Clarence House. By this year, the walkabout was by buggy.

Apart from her problems of mobility, her public appearances this year have exhibited a lady who is frail, but by no means excessively so for her 95 years. Ever the consummate actress, she has retained a steely talent for pleasing her public, her backbone stiffened by a healthy taste for gin and Dubonnet.

Decision hangs on answer to three questions



MEDICAL BRIEFING

The Queen Mother has had the knack of being beset by problems that are readily understandable to the general public. Now all those tens of thousands of people whose hips have worn out while they are still otherwise intellectually and physically fit will immediately relate to the problems which she has had to suffer.

The rules about when to have a hip replacement are simple. The doctor asks a few simple questions. Is the pain, and disability, preventing the patient from carrying on their normal, professional duties? Is the discomfort stopping this sufferer from enjoying a pleasurable activity which is important to their lifestyle? Is the damaged hip preventing the patient from sleeping? If the answer to any of these is "yes", a hip replacement should be considered.

In the Queen Mother's particular case there is no doubt that she would have felt it her duty, both because of her royal role in the war and the number of her family who were killed in both the wars, to be at the Cenotaph and the Royal British Legion festival. She must have grieved that her hips prevented her from being present. In respect to her outside interests the Queen Mother has always been an active countrywoman and rural pursuits have been important to her life. In her case to be able to negotiate pavements only in a buggy must be anathema. Nobody, other than the Queen Mother and her doctor, know the effect the pain from her hips has had on her sleep.

Age in itself is no bar to surgery for arthritic hips. Evidence shows that older people often do better with hip replacements than those who are younger. Young, or even middle-aged, athletes insist

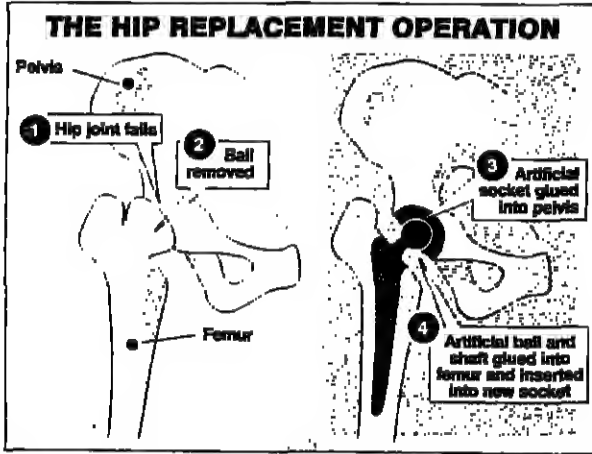
on still playing cricket or skiing and, not unnaturally, their new hips, when subjected to these stresses, suffer badly.

Casting a fly over a Scottish river is much less destructive to the hip joint even if you are 65 than is being a fast bowler at the age of 35. Hip replacements, so long as the initial operation has been successful, last longer in the older patient.

Elderly people are more liable to suffer deep vein thrombosis and subsequent pulmonary embolism than younger patients and orthopaedic surgery is particularly dangerous. The Queen Mother would have to be persuaded to take exercise early, as my father used to say "only the young are healthy enough to lie in bed when ill". In the past the troubles of many older patients after surgery were attributed to post-operative pneumonia. It is now known they were suffering from pulmonary emboli.

With the advent of the thallium scan, cardiologists can say with remarkable certainty how well the heart of any particular patient will respond to prolonged surgery. The days of learned physicians having to hum and haw by the bedside before issuing a well-judged clinical opinion on the likely outcome of an anaesthetic are being replaced by scientific data which help the cardiologist and anaesthetist to produce a definitive answer based not only on experience but also on the objective results of scientific tests. In an operation of this sort the anaesthetist is as important as the surgeon.

DR THOMAS
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Last seen at Pemberley in Derbyshire, Mr Darcy's shirt makes a surprise reappearance in the front car park at the BBC White City, 201 Wood Lane, London W12. It's just one of a host of props and artefacts going under the hammer this Sunday morning in a celebrity auction in aid of the BBC Children In Need charity. The sale starts at 10am and will close at 1pm. If you can't get there, but want a last look at the shirt you longed to undo, the auction will be live on BBC1's The 11th Hour at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning.



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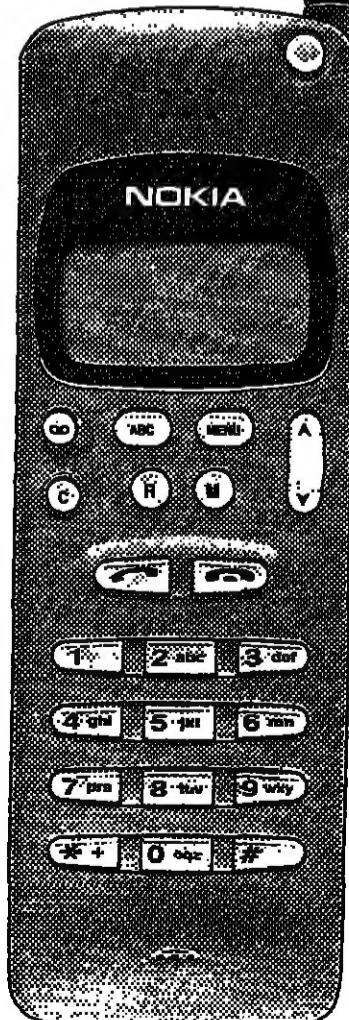
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"Excellent build quality, neat detailing and niceties such as wooden trim, allow the Civic to put an upmarket slant on economy performance," enthused Maurice Glover in The Times."

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*Government figures shown. Further figures: Urban Cycle, 40.4 mpg. At a constant 75 mph, 43.9 mpg. Touring Average, 45.7 mpg. **Car 95, The Times 5th August 1995.

Urban deprivation worse than decade ago, says successor to Faith in the City report

Church finds 'sea of indifference' has left inner cities adrift

By Ruth Gledhill
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S cities are at "crisis point" and efforts to regenerate them have had little tangible impact, according to a church report published yesterday.

Ten years after its controversial *Faith in the City* report was condemned by one Cabinet minister as "Marxist theology", the new Church of England report *Staying in the City* says that urban deprivation is as bad if not worse than ten years ago.

The report was immediately criticised by John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, who said he was disappointed that the authors had not requested a meeting with him. He said he would have been happy to meet them to discuss the issues.

Mr Gummer, a churchgoer and former member of the General Synod, said there was still "a very big problem that needs to be addressed". He said, however, that much of the Government's work in the inner cities reflected the recommendations in *Faith in the City*. "The report underestimates the enormous amount that has been done."

The report says that numer-



Gummer immediately criticised the report

ous government, community, church and private initiatives have failed to breathe new life into inner-city areas stricken with poverty. It describes "a sea of government indifference" and says the Government has often done the opposite of what was recommended by *Faith in the City*. Urban deprivation now poses "a growing threat to the social and economic health of the nation as a whole", the report says, describing a "worrying concentration" of severe deprivation in the centres and outskirts of the biggest cities.

It says there have been significant achievements, and records a number of schemes set up by the Church, including the Church Urban Fund, which has raised more than £21 million for inner-city projects. A grim picture is painted of deep-seated problems and a lack of overall proper funding, however.

Staying in the City, which, unlike its predecessor, addresses all its recommendations to the Church and makes no recommendations to government, says one clear fact that has emerged is that "the gap between rich and poor has grown much wider".

The report's authors, who surveyed 400 clergy and have also included the findings of recent national and local surveys, by different bodies, looked "in vain" for any immediate impact of *Faith in the City*, which made 23 recommendations to government and 38 to the Church.

The report, written by the bishops' advisory group for "urban priority areas", notes a decline in real terms in revenue support grant, a sidelining of local authorities in favour of big business, a loss of funding for the voluntary sector "and a continued indifference towards outer estates".

The Bishop of Bradwell, Laurence Green, the Bishop of Liverpool, David Sheppard, and the Bishop of Leicester, Thomas Butler, gathered for the launch yesterday of the church report *Staying in the City*

While applauding new links between Church and government, "the impression is gained of a sea of government indifference".

The clergy described problems of unemployment, marital breakdown, burglary, vandalism, drugs, fear of crime and a decline in health and public transport.

The Bishop of Leicester, the

Right Rev Thomas Butler, said at the launch of the report: "There is a lot to be pleased about. In spite of financial pressures, the Church of England has maintained a presence in deprived areas when most other bodies, such as banks, industry and shops, have left."

He conceded that inner cities and other places of urban deprivation were on the

national agenda but "the appalling news is that, despite some increase in national prosperity, there has been no consistent improvement in certain areas". He said: "Britain's inner cities and outer estates are still, in many cases, concentrations of severe deprivation, social exclusion, indignity and despair."

Dame Jill Knight, vice-chairman of the 1922 Commit-

tee of Tory backbench MPs, said: "I believe the motivation behind this new report is more political than anything else. But it would be impossible to satisfy the demands made in reports of this kind."

David Shaw, MP for Dover and vice-chairman of the Tory backbench finance committee, said: "These reports are overly dramatic and make no practical suggestions."

Tycoon's boy loses fight to be British

A millionaire plans to emigrate because his adopted Nepalese son has lost an appeal against deportation. Richard Morley, who owns Clearwell Castle, Gloucestershire, brought Jayaram Khadka to England seven years ago to keep a promise to the boy's father, who once saved his life while climbing but has since died. The Home Office says there is no residence permit for Jayaram, now 19. Mr Morley, a computer entrepreneur, is looking for a country to take them and says: "The Secretary of State will not grant compassionate circumstances."

Lorry liberated

Kevin Smith, 25, the driver whose lorry had been stuck in a narrow lane near Craigcennan, West Glamorgan, since Tuesday, was rescued yesterday by two local farmers using a tractor and a mechanical digger. Plans for an RAF helicopter to free the lorry were abandoned.

Island hopper

A Jamaican tropical tree frog that stowed away in a box of bananas and landed in the Orkney Islands has been given a home at Edinburgh Zoo. The frog, christened Fred by supermarket workers in Kirkwall, was found as they unpacked boxes of fruit from the West Indies.

Driver jailed

Daniel Rowbottom, 18, of Seale, North Yorkshire, was sent to a young offenders' institution for five years by Bradford Crown Court after pleading guilty to causing the death of Geoffrey Calvert, 56, by dangerous driving and driving with excess alcohol in April last year.

Permanent force

A pilot scheme involving local volunteers running a police station has proved so successful that it is to be made permanent. The 12 unpaid staff at Bishop's Cleeve station near Cheltenham will continue to deal with paperwork, telephone calls and public inquiries.

Ronay plumps for £1.99 Christmas pudding

EGON RONAY, the food critic and president of the British Academy of Gastronomy, has chosen a 1lb Christmas pudding sold by Tesco at £1.99 and mince pies from the Co-op at 75p for six as best buys this Christmas (Robin Young writes). In a blind tasting Mr Ronay rated the Tesco pudding twice as good as a £4.25 pudding from Harrods, which he placed second.

He gave the Co-op mince pies a perfect score of ten out of ten, but also commended pies from Iceland, Marks & Spencer and Tesco. "It was very difficult to judge the puddings because so many of them were equally mediocre," Mr Ronay commented. "The pies were generally of a higher standard."

Announced promotions include: Asda: six boneless chicken breasts

WEEKEND SHOPPING

£5.59 for 1.02kg, large avocados 39p each, savoy cabbages 39p each, pineapples 79p each, Gold Medal luxury ice-cream £1.59 for 500ml.

Budgens: 50 frozen party-size sausage rolls 99p, large oranges 16p each, ruby red grapefruit 29p each.

Co-op: pork spare-rib chops £2.84 a kg, fresh medium chicken (1.6kg) £2.99, frozen New Zealand half leg of lamb £2.99 for 900g, duck and orange pâté 79p for 150g, North Atlantic prawns £3.99 for 400g.

Iceland: pork-boned chicken breasts £3.79 for 1.5kg, smoked haddock fillets £2.99 for 680g, South American upside beef joints £1.99 a lb, garden peas £1.99 for 1.8kg, tiramisu £1.99 for 500g.

Harrods: smoked haunch of Scottish venison £2.20 per 100g, squid with paella £1.70 per 100g, artichoke tortelloni £2 per 100g, Brie de Nages cheeses £12.95.

Marks & Spencer: family-size cottage pie £2.75, two chicken breast fillets in breadcrumb £1.99, fish casserole £3.99, vegetable/bean chilli £1.29, coconut tart £1.19.

Morrisons: fresh chicken 59p a lb, whole mackerel £1.74 a kg, fresh mussels 99p a kg, carrots 13p a lb, savoy cabbages 29p each, filled jacket potatoes 89p each, best potatoes 79p for 2.5kg.

Safeway: fresh medium chicken (1.362kg) £1.49, whole/half lamb shoul-

der £2.39 a kg, parsnips 59p a lb, McIntosh apples 49p a lb, clementines 59p a lb.

Salisbury's: fresh braising steak £3.79 a kg, large cod fillets £4.10 a kg, fresh salmon steaks £7.15 a kg, Parma ham £1.45 for 100g, full fat creme fraiche 49p for 200ml.

Somerville: fresh turkey and bacon loaf 92p for 397g, whole duck £2.59 a kg, closed-cup mushrooms 79p a lb, cherry tomatoes 79p a pack.

Tesco: forerib of beef £4.78 a kg, lamb chump steaks £9.99 a kg, boneless leg of pork £2.89 a kg, cod fillet £1.95 a lb, salmon fillet £3.25 a lb, leeks 59p a lb.

Waitrose: three pork loin steaks £1.79, six boneless chicken breasts £6.45, mackerel 89p a lb, cup or chestnut mushrooms 99p a lb, greens 45p a lb, Concorde pears 99p for four.

Pavement ban boosts greengrocer's trade

A GREENGROCER who expects his trade to suffer after the High Court ordered him to remove his pavement display was yesterday serving more customers than usual.

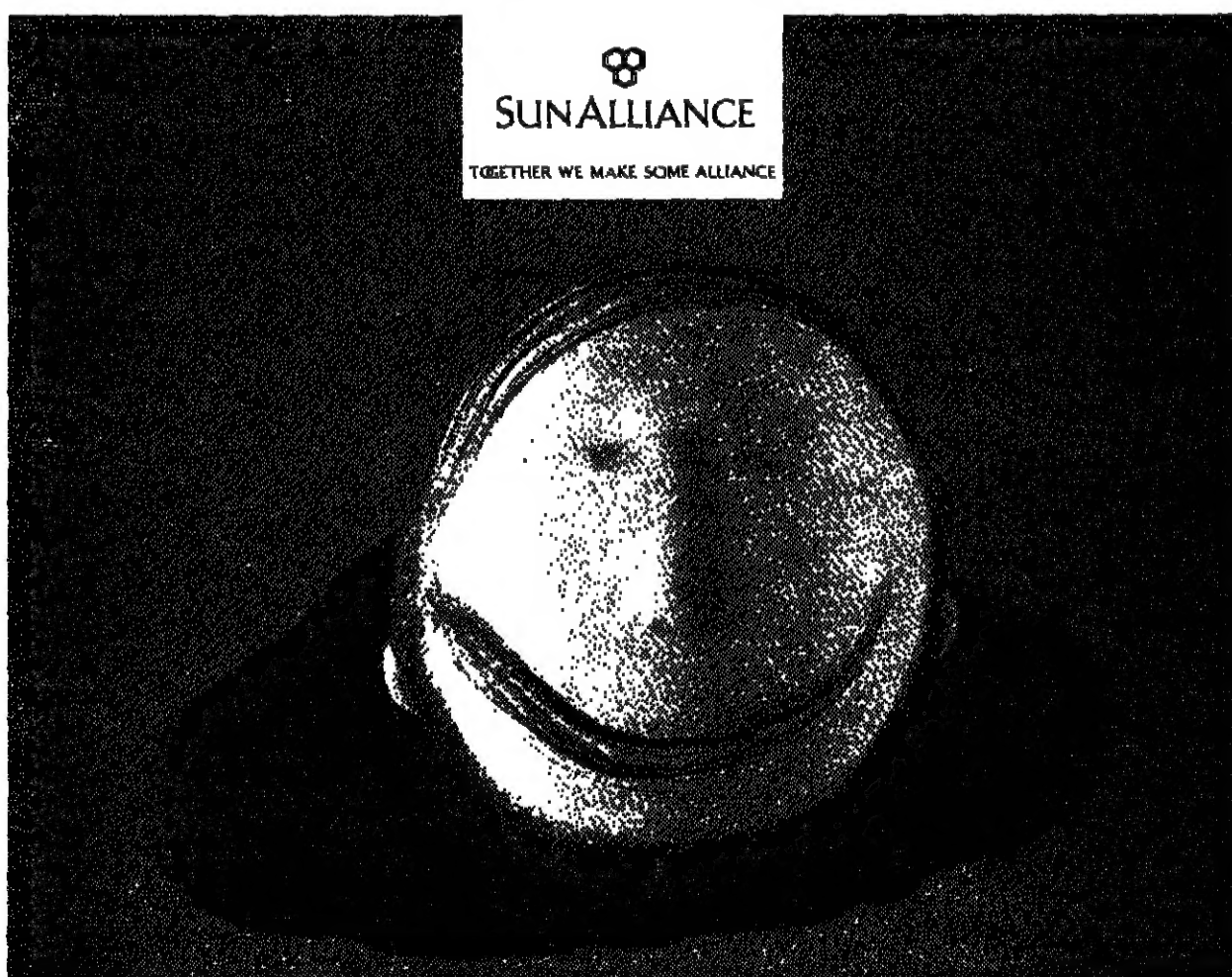
However, Brian Godfrey, 54, said: "I don't expect it will last. This time next week I'll be yesterday's news and then I'll have a fight on to survive."

For the first time since he bought the business with redundancy money in 1988, the former miner did not set up the colourful 3ft-wide display of fresh goods outside his shop in Ilkerton, Derbyshire, in compliance with the court

order, he left everything inside apart from a few apples on a narrow line of boxes on the private strip of land beside the shop.

Mr Godfrey said that everybody thought it ridiculous that Derbyshire County Council, having lost in the magistrates' court, should have taken the case against "a small, hard-working businessman" to the High Court, but he was a law-abiding man and would not go against the court order.

"People have been ringing up in support of me and one woman even offered to pay my legal expenses," he said.



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Rifkind hints at tougher action against Nigeria

By Alice Thomson and James Landale

THE Foreign Secretary hinted yesterday at tougher action against Nigeria over the hanging last week of the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists.

Malcolm Rifkind refused to rule out further sanctions, including the freezing of Nigeria's bank accounts and foreign assets, provided such action did not harm innocent Nigerian people.

He said it was "right and proper" that the Commonwealth had responded in an unprecedented way by suspending Nigeria, and that Britain had imposed an arms embargo. He was later supported by the Prime Minister, who said that the length of Nigeria's suspension depended "on its own conduct".

Opening the second day of debate on the Queen's Speech, Mr Rifkind was asked if it was the right moment for Shell to be launching a major gas investment in Nigeria. He said that it was a matter for the company, which had said that any revenue would not accrue to the Nigerian Government before the turn of the century. "If that is true, we would hope that Nigeria, long before that time, will have a democratic government."

On nuclear testing in the Pacific, Mr Rifkind denied that Britain had been given privileged access to information by the French. But he resisted demands to condemn

the tests, again defending France's right to stage them.

"The reality is that it is no coincidence that the UK as a West European nuclear power should perhaps have a greater understanding of why the French have found it necessary to have certain final tests before they sign the comprehensive test ban treaty."

He poured scorn on the "unashamed" CND membership of some present Labour frontbenchers under the leadership of Michael Foot in the early 1980s. He said that Labour's so-called conversion to the support of nuclear weapons was populist and skin-deep.

On Europe, Mr Rifkind said few MPs doubted that Britain's future lay in the EU. "We will be motivated by the interests of the UK. This is not a matter of blinkered self-interest. It is a matter of the Government's inescapable obligation to its own people."

For Labour, Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, attacked Michael Portillo over his anti-Brussels speech at the Tory party conference. "The Defence Secretary's jingoism had its day 100 years ago," he said. "It is a positive menace in the modern world."

On Nigeria, Mr Cook urged the Government to use "every lever available" to put pressure on the country's military regime. He said that the United Nations should be

asked to impose oil sanctions.

"The way to show we are serious is to show we are prepared to cut the flow of oil and the flow of cash into that country."

He acknowledged that sanctions could sometimes harm the public, but this was not the case in Nigeria. "The whole point of Ken Saro-Wiwa's campaign was that the peoples of Nigeria saw too little of the oil revenues."

He attacked the Government for granting an export licence for CS gas and rubber bullets to be sold to Nigeria this year. "Is that right?" he asked Mr Rifkind. "If it is right, does he really think it was just to give those tools of repression to such a brutal military regime?"

Mr Cook said the Government had granted asylum to only one Nigerian out of 2,032 who had applied in the past year. "I challenge the Foreign Secretary to say... that 99.9 per cent of those applications were bogus."

Mr Cook also attacked Mr Major for his defence of French nuclear tests at the Commonwealth conference. "We cannot fail to be alarmed by a British Prime Minister not behaving as a leader of the Commonwealth, but behaving as the odd man out," he said.

"This is a Government which speaks for itself but damages our international relations for the rest of the country."



MPs demand Olympic effort

MINISTERS were criticised yesterday for failing to co-ordinate British bids for world sporting events (Arthur Leathley writes).

A cross-party committee of MPs told Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, that there was little point to her department unless it provided a focus for attempts to host events such as the Olympic Games. British

lack of success could be blamed on the "sometimes amateur and unsophisticated approach of some sports bodies" in making bids.

The National Heritage Select Committee investigated Britain's efforts to stage international sporting events in the light of recent failures. Manchester's unsuccessful bids for the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games have de-

terred Britain from trying to host the Games in 2004.

In its report the committee said: "Unless Britain does co-ordinate the multitudinous and sometimes apparently conflicting organisations which are involved, and is given a clear national focus, then our country is unlikely to be successful in any bid for which there is fierce competition."

Asylum seekers are fair game for political debate

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

Tony Blair is being disingenuous in suggesting that the Asylum and Immigration Bill should be taken "out of party politics altogether". The handling of bogus asylum claims is a legitimate subject for political debate on which the parties may differ. What matters is how the issue is debated.

It is wrong, morally and politically, to play upon people's racial fears — on that Mr Blair and John Major are agreed. The Prime Minister has a long record of supporting good race relations. What Mr Blair is worried about is that the Tories and their tabloid allies will play up party differences on immigration and asylum during the election campaign and this may appeal to some potential Labour voters. Hence, Labour wants to avoid being portrayed as "soft" and wants to neutralise the issue, and the "race card", by taking the Bill out of the partisan debate. But it is impossible to take the politics out of any contentious matter. That is what Parliament is all about. Attempts to depoliticise any issue can produce a form of bipartisan blandness which brushes aside understandable public concerns, and in the long term encourages extremists.

The political process should focus on the extent of a genuine problem and propose remedies. The duty of politicians is to avoid provoking exaggerated fears about its scale, about Britain being "swamped" by asylum seekers and the like. There is agreement between the parties about the need to tackle bogus applications and fraud, while treating genuine asylum seekers with sympathy. The tenfold rise in claims for asylum since 1988 has produced serious difficulties and delays. This obviously requires changes to make legislation work more effectively.

Opinions may differ about the solutions and Mr Blair is mistaken to imply that these can be conjured out of existence by the use of a device like a special standing committee. This is the rarely used procedure by which a committee holds three sessions taking evidence on the workings of a Bill from affected parties between the second reading and the line-by-line debates in a normal standing committee. Such committees have generally been used only on non-contentious Bills to improve drafting. Government business managers have been reluctant to use this procedure more generally because of fear that it will hold up an already tight legislative timetable.

The advantage of setting up such a committee is that it would help to identify the scale of fraud and could examine whether the Government's proposed remedies might work efficiently and equitably. Ministers have been predictably wary about the suggestion, not least because of the way it was launched by Mr Blair at the opening of the Queen's Speech debate. But they should examine the idea on its merits. This procedure should be used, not only for the Asylum and Immigration Bill but also more generally.

The case for greater pre-legislative scrutiny has been made by a whole series of bodies, ranging from the Hansard Society Commission on the legislative process to the recent proposals from Labour's Jeff Rooker and from Democratic Audit. The hope is that such inquiries might improve the quality of legislation and avoid the mistakes and consequent amendments so often necessary at present.

Such scrutiny might produce better legislation but it cannot remove party differences on any particular measure. Mr Blair is right to suggest the use of the special standing committee procedure for this Bill but he is wrong to talk about "a genuine consensual exercise in getting at the truth". That is a cosy, and misleading, smokescreen for Labour's desire to defuse a tricky political issue.

PETER RIDDELL

Britain urges right of appeal against European court

By Philip Webster and Alice Thomson

BRITAIN is urging her Brussels partners to consider allowing governments to appeal against judgments of the European Court of Justice.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, is backing reforms to a court that has angered ministers with a series of judgments, most recently

that forcing a change in British laws on prescription charges. He is also proposing that the court's powers to force member countries to pay retrospective damages should be limited. Often there are substantial awards going back over a number of years, even in cases where failure to comply with a directive may have been in good faith.

The prescriptions ruling, allowing

men to receive free prescriptions at the same age as women, threatened to cost £500 million in claims for reimbursement from men aged between 60 and 64. In the event, the Government won a reprieve limiting retrospective claims to three months.

The introduction of an appeals procedure would be a substantial change. Mr Rifkind's decision to push for its consideration will delight

Euro-sceptics, who have consistently called for curbs on its activities.

Yesterday the Lords Select Committee on the European Communities published a report on the forthcoming inter-governmental conference warning that the problems of enlarging the EU must be tackled now. The report, which had unanimous agreement, argues that the IGC must have two main objectives:

to make the EU more efficient and effective, and to address the need for it to become less opaque and more credible.

The report calls for each member state to have only one commissioner. It also concludes that as the Union grows, some form of team presidency will be necessary otherwise countries will have to wait for 12 years before holding the office.

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Lafontaine expected to establish coalition with Greens as a challenge to Kohl

'Napoleon of Saar' takes over German opposition

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GERMANY'S opposition leader, Rudolf Scharping, was stripped of his job as chairman of the Social Democrats yesterday and replaced by an emotional left-wing populist who will present Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, with a much tougher challenge on issues as diverse as Bosnia-Herzegovina and European monetary union.

Oskar Lafontaine, the 52-year-old Prime Minister of the Saar region, was cheered enthusiastically by party conference delegates, having engineered and won a surprise vote for the leadership. The new chairman, known as the "Napoleon of the Saar", will try to recover votes lost to the Greens in west Germany, and to the former Communist Party of Democratic Socialism in the east. Analysts expect Herr Lafontaine to build up a core of support and then steer the party towards a Social Democrat-Green coalition as



Scharping: first leader toppled at conference

an alternative to Herr Kohl in 1998. Under his leadership, the election campaign will probably still be fought on the issue of European monetary union, but not from a nationalist perspective. The tubby premier, who was the official challenger to Herr Kohl in

1990, was against the Maastricht treaty because it did not contain solid enough provisions for a political union. He will thus be pressing the Chancellor hard to secure agreement on the Europol police network and other issues, before EMU goes ahead. The party, he told the conference in Mannheim, will not contest the 1998 election on a nationalist, defend-the-mark platform.

Herr Scharping becomes deputy chairman and will remain leader of the parliamentary caucus. It is unlikely, however, that he will be able to cling to his other office, that of official contender for the position of Chancellor. This role will probably be taken over by the Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, Gerhard Schröder.

Only two weeks ago, the party executive gave its full backing to Herr Scharping, but his performance has been dismal since the elections last

year and popular support has slumped by almost 9 per cent to reach a postwar low of 27 per cent. By contrast, Herr Kohl's Christian Democrats are scoring about 44 per cent. But the view was that Herr Scharping would be replaced only if there were miserable results in the three regional elections due in March.

The party chairman had expected to be automatically re-elected; no Social Democrat leader has ever been toppled at conference.

The new chairman is a mass of seeming contradictions. Brought up as a Roman Catholic in a strict Jesuit school, he divorced two of his wives and lived for many years with a Social Democrat activist. He remains a pacifist, but has become more pragmatic over the years. In the early 1980s, he wanted to withdraw Germany from the military structure of Nato; on Wednesday, he pushed a reso-



Oskar Lafontaine and his wife, Christa, smile after his election as the Social Democrats' leader yesterday

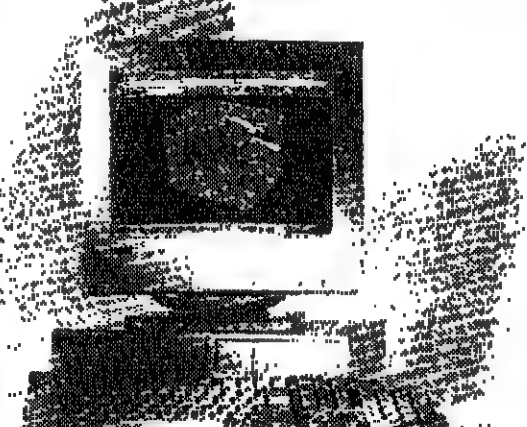
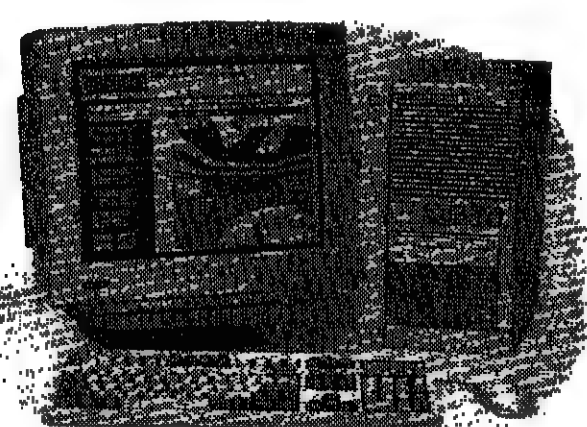
lution banning the use of German Tornado jets over Bosnia. He is against the Maastricht treaty, but only because it is not federalist enough. He was opposed to German unity, above all the

huge costs of a quick merger. He is against nuclear energy, and wants to create jobs by encouraging the environmental protection industry; these are the classical positions of a Left-leaning Social Democrat

in Germany. At the same time, he is challenging party taboos by urging more job flexibility on the trade unions.

□ Munich: A co-founder of the far-right Republicans left the party yesterday in a move seen as symptomatic of internal strife. Franz Schönhuber, 72, blasted the party leadership for "coddling up" to mainstream parties. Herr Schönhuber was removed as party chairman last year. (AP)

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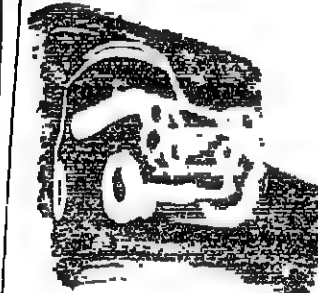
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Algerians defy militant wrath to cast ballots

DEEP in the heart of the casbah, nervous stares followed the veiled women as they shuffled through the arch into the polling station beside Sakardji prison, where Islamic militants from the surrounding shantytowns of Algiers are being detained.

Election fever blew like a cold wind through the militants' heartland on the hill above the city. "Viva OIA," said graffiti on a wall, promoting the military campaign of Algeria's radical Armed Islamic Group against the Government. Gendarmes wearing balaclavas crept by in bullet-proof vehicles.

"I don't think it's going to change anything... this election. We really need a miracle to bring real change," said a 20-year-old woman standing inside the polling station in the shadow of the prison. "This district where I live is dangerous. There are people here checking out everybody who goes to vote. But I voted anyway."

Late yesterday, the Interior Ministry said that out of nearly 16 million Algerians eligible to choose one of the four presidential candidates, 65.5 per cent had cast their ballots by 5pm. The 7,833 polling stations were scheduled to close at 7pm, but the ministry, citing "a heavy turnout," said several centres would remain open for up to two hours longer.

Algerian television said 44 per cent of citizens outside the country had voted.

A man, carrying three loaves of bread home to his family, said: "People have voted, despite the threats. A lot of the threats are rumours." He added: "Personally, I voted for President Zeroual, because he is the man of the FLN [the National Liberation Front] which started the indepen-

The Government claimed more than 65 per cent of voters went to the polls yesterday despite threats by radicals, writes Mark Hubbard in Algiers

dence struggle against the French colonialists. My father was FLN, and so am I, even if I live in the area where there's supposed to be only militants," he said, disappearing into a hallway of a once-elegant tenement building.

A 76-year-old woman edged past him with her daughter. She was on her way to the Ennhada centre, the local polling station. "I want to vote to bring peace to my country," she said, as her daughter looked nervously about her.

"Most of the people voting in Bab el-Oued and the casbah are going to be voting for Hamas," said Hakim Belkader, the observer for the Hamas Islamic Party at the Ennhada centre. The Hamas candidate, Sheikh Mahfoud Nahmah, is tipped to come second in the election, which Mr Zeroual is expected to win.

At the last legislative elections in 1991, which saw the

now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) sweep to power, 45 per cent of the electorate voted. Since then, 40,000 people have died in civil conflict.

"Most of the people who voted for the FIS will be voting for Hamas," said Hakim Belkader. "And if we win, the FIS will be rehabilitated."

What is clear about this election is that the turnout is as significant as the result. In boycotting the elections, the FIS and its co-sponsors of a national plan for reconciliation have created two contests. Respect for the boycott would be a mark of support for FIS in particular. Equally, votes for President Zeroual indicate support for the military campaign that has become the hallmark of his presidency.

"We can't live like this forever. We can't live in fear," said a young woman yesterday as she waited outside the Ecole Dali in the east Algerian hill town of Tizi-Ouzou, 60 miles from Algiers.

"We hope there will be a change. We women simply can't go out anymore. This morning, I told my mother that I was going to vote, and she asked me if I didn't have fear of doing so. So, she stayed at home and now I hope that very soon after the election there will be a great effort to change things for women," she said.

She and her fiancé were voting for different candidates, a sign of how far the new-found multiparty culture has established itself in this conservative Islamic society.



A security official searches a voter outside a polling booth in Algiers yesterday

□ The candidates are: President Zeroual (backed by the military); Sheikh Mahfoud Nahmah (Hamas Islamic Party); Said Sadi (anti-Islamic); and Noureddin Boukrouh (Islamic moderate).

□ Electoral system: A two-round presidential election, in which the winning candidate has to get 50 per cent of the vote in the first round or a simple majority in the second round, to be held on Decem-

ber 15. Women have the same voting rights as men.

□ Campaign: There are no reliable polls, but is thought likely that Mr Zeroual will win. To give the election credibility he promised that campaign funds, air time and representation on the supervisory committee would be shared equally among candi-

dates. About 30,000 members of the security forces are protecting candidates.

□ History: Algeria became independent in 1962. The first free elections in 1992 were cancelled by the army when it appeared Islamic fundamentalists were winning.

□ Powers: President elected for five-year term, appoints the Prime Minister, empowered to legislate by decree after consultations with him.

Arab anger with Britain grows for sheltering exiles

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

ADDING to the tide of alarm throughout the Middle East, President Mubarak of Egypt yesterday warned Britain that it would pay "a very high price" for granting asylum to Muslim militants.

"I do not understand countries which, like Germany, Britain and others, grant political asylum to such criminals," he told *Le Monde*.

His remarks, together with a furious British response yesterday to the endorsement by dissident Saudi exiles in London of the Riyadh car bomb, highlight an issue that has set almost all Arab Governments at loggerheads with Britain: the use of London as an operational centre by Islamic militants.

Saudi Arabia was not the only Middle East country where Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, was berated last week over the presence of activists making use of London as a centre to incite uprisings in their home countries. In almost every capital he visited he was asked why Britain did not do more to curb Islamic militancy.

Leaders of nations enjoying good relations with Britain expressed astonishment at lax British laws, while British businessmen expressed fears that export orders were being lost as a result.

Mr Rifkind's reply was that the security services were keeping known militants under surveillance. Anyone caught breaking British law would be deported. But he insisted that the Foreign Office could not take action in an area beyond its jurisdiction.

Yesterday, however, the Foreign Office condemned a statement by a Saudi exile group, the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights, for saying that American soldiers killed in the Riyadh attack were a legitimate target. It repeated assertions by

John Major that Islamic activists seeking asylum in Britain were unwelcome. "Their views are thoroughly distasteful to both Government and people," a spokesman said.

Senior Whitehall officials admit privately to deep frustration at gaps in British law that give militants greater freedom of manoeuvre here than in almost any other European country. "There is no doubt the law has to be changed," one official said.

There is no law to stop any resident foreigner from using Britain to plot assassinations, terror campaigns and subversion overseas — as long as he does not break British law. Laws prohibiting incitement to violence or racial hatred appear to apply only to the United Kingdom; the Government has never prosecuted a foreigner for incitement to violence overseas. "At the least, we need to ensure that anything that would be considered a crime in Britain should also be criminal if aimed at targets overseas," an official said.

But given the strength of feeling over free speech and worries that a new law might stop exiles opposing corrupt regimes in Iraq or Nigeria, a change in statutes is unlikely.



Mubarak: Britain will pay "very high price"



President Zeroual casts his ballot yesterday

France hopes poll will end bombings

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRANCE anxiously observed Algeria's presidential elections yesterday, conscious that hopes of ending the recent wave of Islamic terrorism on French soil may rest on the outcome.

A convincing victory for President Zeroual should boost dialogue between the Algerian Government and its Islamic opponents, and perhaps bring an end to the violence afflicting in France and its former colony, French government officials said yesterday.

Terrorists have struck eight times in France since July, killing seven people and injuring more than 160. The Armed Islamic Group, which has claimed responsibility for the bomb attacks, threatened to

step up its terror campaign unless President Chirac denounced the Algerian elections. French security forces have rounded up scores of alleged Islamic terrorists, including the suspected bombing co-ordinator.

The French Government has maintained an officially neutral stance on Algeria, insisting that it will not meddle in the country's internal affairs, while simultaneously putting strong pressure on Algeria to introduce democratic reforms.

M Chirac, who fears that Islamic extremism is seeping into poverty-stricken French city suburbs, has said that future economic aid to Algeria will depend on progress towards democracy.

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Food for thought

T17

Gingrich blames Clinton 'insult' for budget crisis

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

NEWTON GINGRICH, the House Speaker, said yesterday that his position on the budget crisis had hardened because President Clinton had snubbed him and Robert Dole, the Republican Senate leader, during their journey to and from Yitzhak Rabin's funeral in Jerusalem.

Mr Gingrich claimed that they were given seats in the back of Air Force One, ignored by Mr Clinton during the entire 25-hour journey, and forced to disembark through a rear door.

Leon Panetta, the White House Chief of Staff, said it was "outrageous" that Mr Gingrich and Mr Dole had shut down the Government because "perhaps their egos were not stroked".

The White House released a grainy black-and-white photograph of the bored-looking President sitting slumped in his chair at the Air Force One conference table with the two

Republican leaders right opposite him.

Last night American foreign policy became the latest victim of the country's deepening budget crisis. Officials issued a warning that, after the President's cancellation of his Japan visit, his trip to Britain and Ireland in 11 days time may also be abandoned if the shutdown continues.

The President was anxious to help to "build the momentum" of the Irish peace process but "we'll have to take things day by day," Mike McCurry, the White House press secretary, said. Planning was continuing but "if the trip doesn't take place people won't be staggered", a British official said.

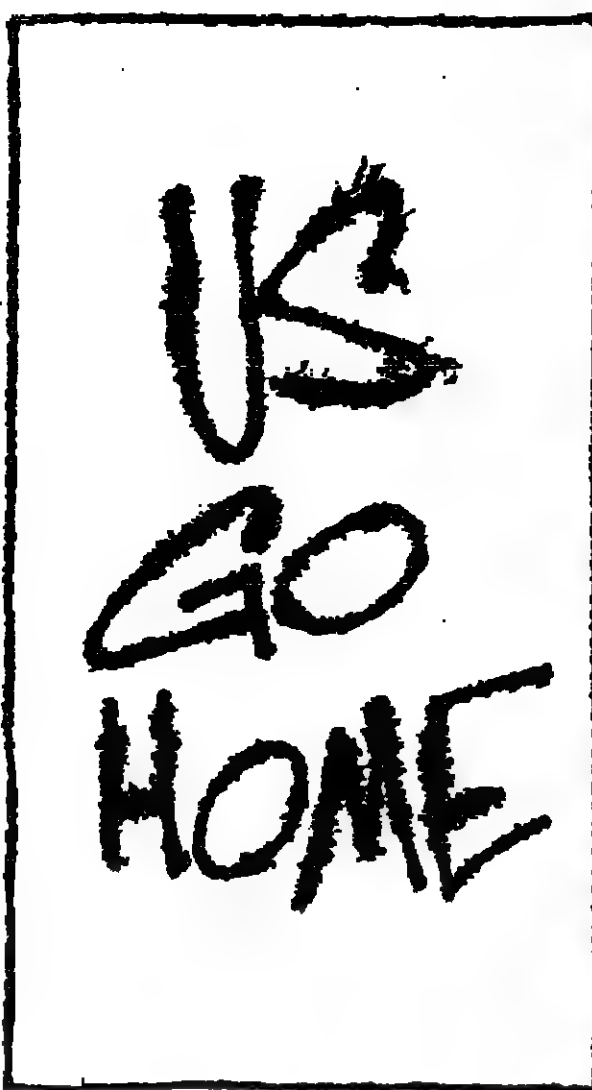
At the very least, the five-day trip may be cut to three, with just one spent day in London featuring an address to both Houses of Parliament and the abandonment of a game of golf with Dick Spring,

the Irish Foreign Minister, in Co Kerry.

Publicly, Japan reacted mildly to the cancellation of Mr Clinton's visit and meetings with world leaders at an Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation summit. "It's really regrettable but I suppose it can't be helped," Tomichi Murayama, the Prime Minister, said. The President's decision was nonetheless certain to exacerbate strains in American-Japanese relations.

Already this year Washington has pushed Japan to the brink of a trade war, has been caught spying on Japanese trade negotiators, and has faced Japanese anger over the rape of a 12-year-old Okinawa girl by three American servicemen. Mr McCurry said the cancellation would have "enormous consequences" but blamed "Congress's failure to pass the budget."

Diary, page 20



The 1960s anti-American writing on the wall and the 1990s reality, as viewed by Bado in Le Droit of Ottawa

US pushes for swift accord in talks on Bosnia

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

WARREN CHRISTOPHER, the American Secretary of State, is expected to return to Ohio today in a final effort to achieve a comprehensive peace settlement for Bosnia-Herzegovina as talks entered a critical phase.

The negotiations in Dayton between the presidents of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia have reached a stalemate over territory and Mr Christopher, who is said to be returning early from a visit to Japan, has decided they must be brought to a swift conclusion.

"We've got to bring these talks to a climax, one way or another," one American official said.

The Administration is hoping that indictments for genocide in Srebrenica by the United Nations tribunal in The Hague yesterday against Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader and Ratko Mladic, his military counterpart, will convince the Bosnian delegation in Dayton that justice has not been forgotten.

However, the Bosnian delegation, particularly Haris Silajdzic, the Prime Minister, is believed to have drawn a line in the sand over Srebrenica and Zepa, the eastern Bosnian former "safe areas" overrun by Serb forces earlier this year, where some of the worst atrocities of the war took place. The Bosnian Serbs have said they will not abandon the towns.

The latest indictments against Dr Karadzic and General Mladic are almost certain to help the American cause. Both men, charged earlier in the year with war crimes, had agreed this week to relinquish their positions once a deal had been struck in Dayton that they would not be tried in The Netherlands. The indictment for genocide in Srebrenica, however, makes it easier for President Milosevic of Serbia to discard them and for the Bosnians to agree a settlement.



Mladic Karadzic

President disappoints Japanese at summit

FROM PETER GUNNE HODGSON IN OSAKA

THE decision by President Clinton not to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) summit in Osaka was a great disappointment to his Japanese hosts.

Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Minister for International Trade and Industry, who earlier had criticised Washington for its inconsistent policy, said the decision "is not good news at all for Japan-US relations".

However, some gloom was dispelled with the announcement that the 18 ministers had accepted a broad trade deal. The Action Agenda lays out a blueprint for opening markets in the 21st century in a region that accounts for half the world economy and nearly half its trade.

Last year leaders pledged to open up their economies by 2010 for developed countries and by 2020 for developing ones.

A key agreement was to allow members to be flexible about liberalising sensitive sectors such as agriculture.

Bare-knuckle bouts banned on TV

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

AN EVENING of televised bare-knuckle fighting has been cancelled in New York amid increasing debate about cable television standards.

But the organisers say they will take the fighting style to "Western Europe, probably the United Kingdom, some time next year". They also plan to appeal against the American ruling.

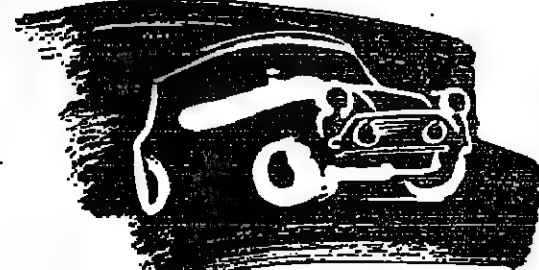
Tomorrow's Extreme Fighting event was to have taken prizefighting back to the days before the Queensberry Rules. Opponents were asked to observe only two restrictions - no eye-gouging and no biting. Bouts would continue until one man submitted, or was rendered unconscious.

Organisers booked a 4,200-seat New York venue owned by the state's Division of Military and Naval Affairs. In a late court judgment,

however, the division succeeded in cancelling its lease with the fight organisers. Government officials argued that the event, which was to have been broadcast on pay-per-view television, was "detrimental to the best interests of the public. Law officers said such fighting was equivalent to "the crime of assault or reckless endangerment".

"This is only round one," said a spokesman for Battlecade Inc, the company behind Extreme Fighting. The company was founded by Bob Guccione, publisher of Penthouse magazine. Advertisements for the event promised "the roughest, toughest, most brutal fighting event in the history of television", and cable viewers were invited to pay almost \$20 (£12) to watch it. Similar American contests have been highly profitable.

...LOTUS EATING...



SEE PAGE 19



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Nigeria's dictator condemns 'meddlers'

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR, AND CHARLES BREMMER IN BRUSSELS

GENERAL SANI ABACHA, the Nigerian military ruler, yesterday accused foreign powers of interfering in internal affairs, and said his country's suspension from the Commonwealth was "most unfortunate and uncalled for". His remarks came as the European Parliament urged European Union states to go beyond their planned military embargo against Nigeria and block oil sales and freeze its leaders' financial assets to demonstrate their abhorrence for the military regime.

The parliament unanimously passed a resolution condemning the Abuja authorities for the "brutal executions" of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the writer, and eight other activists. "The parliament is of the opinion that an oil embargo is one of the most effective ways to put pressure on the Nigerian Government and therefore calls on the Commission and the Council, taking into account the situation of the Nigerian population, to consider imposing such a measure," it said.

General Abacha, in his first public comments on the international furor after the executions, urged Nigerians to "gird your loins and be wary of those posing as friends of our great country". He told the state-owned *Daily Times* that Nigeria would do everything possible "to maintain our unity, stability and security and preserve our integrity and sovereignty as a nation".

A rights group in Nigeria reported last night that security forces had arrested two student union leaders and seven other members of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Lagos, to whom access was now barred. It said the military was frightened of public protests against the hangings.

EU foreign ministers are due to approve a common position on sanctions on Monday. These include an embargo covering the sale of armaments, including spare

parts. The EU, which withdrew its ambassadors on Saturday, will also extend a ban on visas for the Nigerian military and their families to the civilian members of the Government. About £200 million of EU development aid is also to be suspended.

"By means of these measures we hope that the hateful military regime of Nigeria will think again and while we cannot bring (Saro-Wiwa) back to life, nor the other eight people executed with him, at least his sacrifice will not have been in vain," Carlos Westendorp, the Spanish European Affairs Minister, told the parliament.

Neil Kinnock, an EU Commissioner, said it would take weeks or months to tell if the European sanctions had been successful. "If they are not, it may be that the Union will have to contemplate going further and consider stronger measures such as the freezing of assets of members of the regime or the imposition of an embargo on oil imports from Nigeria."

It is unlikely that EU ministers would favour an oil embargo, although some Nordic states back the idea. "It can only be done via the United Nations Security Council and it is unlikely that China and Russia will go along," a senior diplomat noted.



Abacha: appeal for Nigerians' loyalty



Alexandra Manley is congratulated by Prince Joachim after making her first speech in Danish in Jutland

Denmark succumbs to royal fever

FROM REUTERS IN COPENHAGEN

ROYAL fever has gripped Denmark, one of the world's most egalitarian societies, as the country awaits tomorrow's wedding of 26-year-old Prince Joachim to Alexandra Manley, a British economist working in Hong Kong.

Women in the Danish capital are copying her high-crowned hats, tailored suits and sleek coiffure. Shops are selling cakes with the couple's picture and other souvenirs.

Gifts from the public and businesses range from a milk coat to a packet of sweets. Accepting the gifts at Schackenborg Castle on the Jutland peninsula, which will be the couple's home, Miss Manley, 31, made her first speech in Danish in which she thanked Danes for their warmth and generosity.

Denmark's royal dynasty is Europe's oldest, founded in AD 985 by Gorm the Old. Joachim's mother, Queen Margrethe II, is a second cousin of the Queen.

Italians to curb migrants

Rome: The Italian Government yesterday approved controversial new measures on illegal immigrants.

A spokesman said the decree was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, but would not be published until signed into force by President Scalfaro. It is expected to include provisions for the immediate expulsion of illegal immigrants who commit crimes.

The devolutionist Northern League party last week provoked accusations of xenophobic blackmail of the Government by making its support for the crucial 1996 budget of Lamberto Dini, the Prime Minister, conditional on tough new immigration regulations. (Reuters)

Roh sent to jail

Seoul: Roh Tae Woo, the former South Korean President, was arrested and jailed for taking bribes worth more than 230 billion won (£192 million) from business organisations while in office.

Reno unwell

Washington: Janet Reno, 57, the Attorney-General, said she has Parkinson's disease but does not intend to resign. Marion Barry, 59, Mayor of Washington, said he expects to recover from prostate cancer.

Kidnap charge

Guatemala City: A couple were held and charged with kidnapping their own baby in an attempt to extort money from the woman's aunt, Rigoberta Menchu, the Nobel Peace Prize winner. (AP)

Baby killer jailed

Coburg: Holger Krapp was jailed for ten years in Coburg, southern Germany, for beating to death his 12-day-old son to silence him while watching television. Krapp, 24, admitted killing the baby. (AFP)

Name dropping

Bucharest: Romanians will no longer be able to give their children "ridiculous" names, ministers decided. Many children here have been named after television characters such as J. R. Ewing. (AFP)

Three die of drug overdoses in Athens prison rioting

FROM REUTERS IN ATHENS

THREE Greek prisoners died of drug overdoses after raiding a prison hospital during three days of rioting. Police believed two other prisoners inside the jail, west of Athens, were in a coma.

About 1,000 of the 1,500 prisoners in the Korydallos maximum security prison, which was built to house 400, are involved in the rioting. Yesterday they released six staff they had held hostage but there was no sign of the unrest ending. The rioters lit fires on the roof, refused to return to their cells and continued to try to escape.

The bodies of the three dead men were brought out yesterday, but it was not immediately clear when they had died. About 20 Greeks and foreigners have so far been admitted to hospital after fights with other prisoners and drug overdoses. "We are afraid we are going to have more victims," a prison official said.

The prisoners have raided the pharmacy and taken 2,500 syringes and 27,000 pills. The rioters have burnt and wrecked everything they can reach since taking over the prison on Tuesday after a bungled escape attempt. They have a list of demands ranging from better food to less overcrowding.

Riot police surrounding the prison fired teargas to stop attempts to escape through a tunnel. "We still don't control the prison," one police officer said. "But we hope things will become calmer."

The prisoners released the six staff members early yesterday after talks with the Justice Ministry late on Wednesday produced assurances that their demands would be met.

Ex-minister jailed over £2.8m bribes

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

ALAIN CARIGNON, a former French Cabinet minister, was sentenced to three years in prison on corruption charges yesterday. Carignon, 46, was found guilty of accepting gifts from the utilities company, Lyonnaise des Eaux, in return for a water privatisation contract when he was Mayor of Grenoble.

The former Communications Minister in the Government of Edouard Balladur, the former Prime Minister, was sentenced to a total of five years, two suspended, and fined Fr400,000 (£52,980) on the additional charges of passive corruption, interfering with witnesses and being an accomplice to fraud. He was freed pending an appeal.

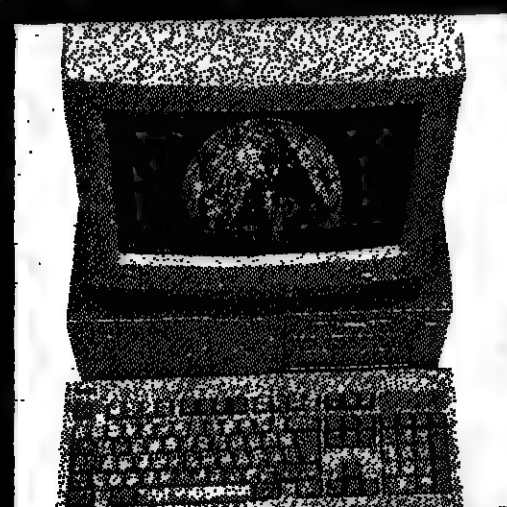
"They are trying to set an example among politicians and they have made me a scapegoat," said Carignon, a

former member of the conservative RPR party. The Lyons court also barred him from seeking political office for five years.

Carignon denied accepting gifts and services worth more than Fr21 million (£2.8 million) in return for the Grenoble water privatisation contract. He was forced to resign from the Balladur Cabinet in July 1994 over the corruption allegations.

Jean-Louis Dutaret, a former aide to Carignon, was sentenced to four years, two suspended, and was fined Fr400,000 for acting as a go-between. Maro-Michel Merlin, the former head of a Lyonnaise des Eaux subsidiary, was sentenced to four years, three suspended, and fined Fr1 million. Four other defendants received suspended sentences.

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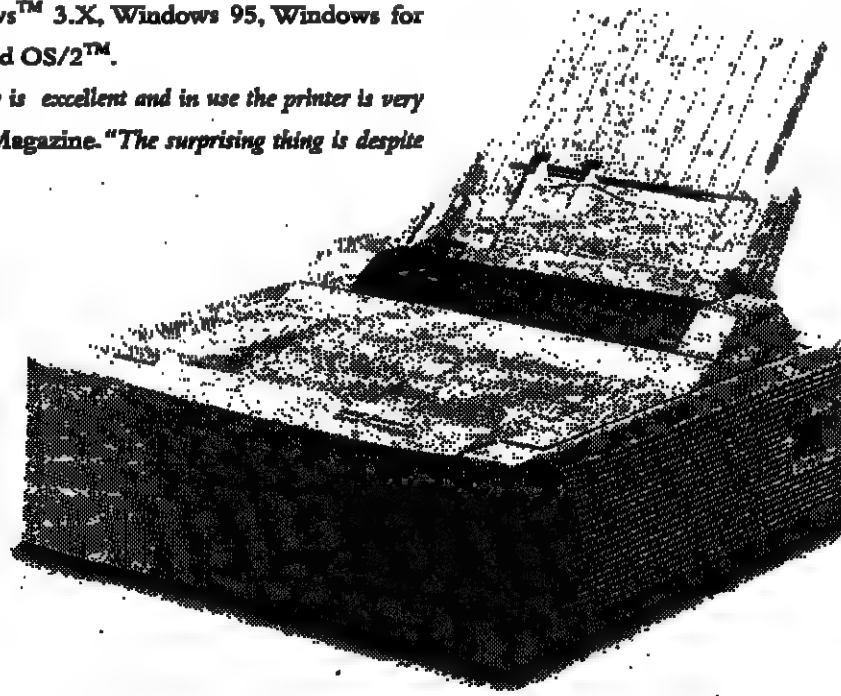
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John Birt flew to America yesterday with the million-dollar Princess of Wales scoop burning a hole in his pocket

'If I'd become a BBC trainee I'd probably be a major opponent of my changes'

As I was leaving John Birt's office I asked him who he was lunching with. He wore his familiar, enigmatic moonbeam smile. "Some things I do are bound to be confidential," Moments later I switched on the *World at One* and heard about Panorama's coup with the Princess. He had been off, with the editor of *Panorama*, to watch the interview for the first time.

Birt is where the buck stops, and he judged that since the Princess wished to do an interview, she should have the opportunity. The timing is perfect: this weekend, when every American TV network wants to buy the Princess, a goldmine for BBC Worldwide. Birt is in New York — receiving the "Directorate Emmy" from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. His wife, Jane, is giving a Thanksgiving dinner in her home town of Washington, and Birt has much to give thanks for.

He gets the honour for "his successful leadership of the BBC during a testing period in its history". It is a vindication of Birtism, which once caused such insecurity and fearfulness.

Does he mind being lampooned, as he has been, even on his own network? I read him a wicked item from *Week Ending*, a parody of the Birt jargon in Liverpoolian monotone: "To better define specific rule objectives and prevent inward-looking perspectives, we must implement a period of behavioural adjustment" (ie. "You're all fired"). His moonbeam dimmed. "As people enter public life and are

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



exposed to criticism, gibes and parodies, it is invariably a painful and shocking experience," he said. "But you get used to it. It's part of the environment in which you operate." In Dublin earlier this year — the speech in which he referred to "overbearing interviewers who sneer disdainfully at interviewees" — he recalled the "climate of fear" at fiercely disciplinarian St Mary's College, Liverpool, where the strap-wielding Irish Christian Brothers instilled their catechism, Latin declensions and politeness. Young John did his homework diligently in the front room with Radio Luxembourg on.

One must picture Birt in 1960s Oxford, when to be a northern engineer was a byword for boring. Here he was introduced to matters artistic, and met Jane Lake, his painter wife, who was at Ruskin. He made a film: "Pretentious, romantic, derivative of Bergman, full of dark symbolism," he says. On his fortieth birthday, Jane hired the Scala in

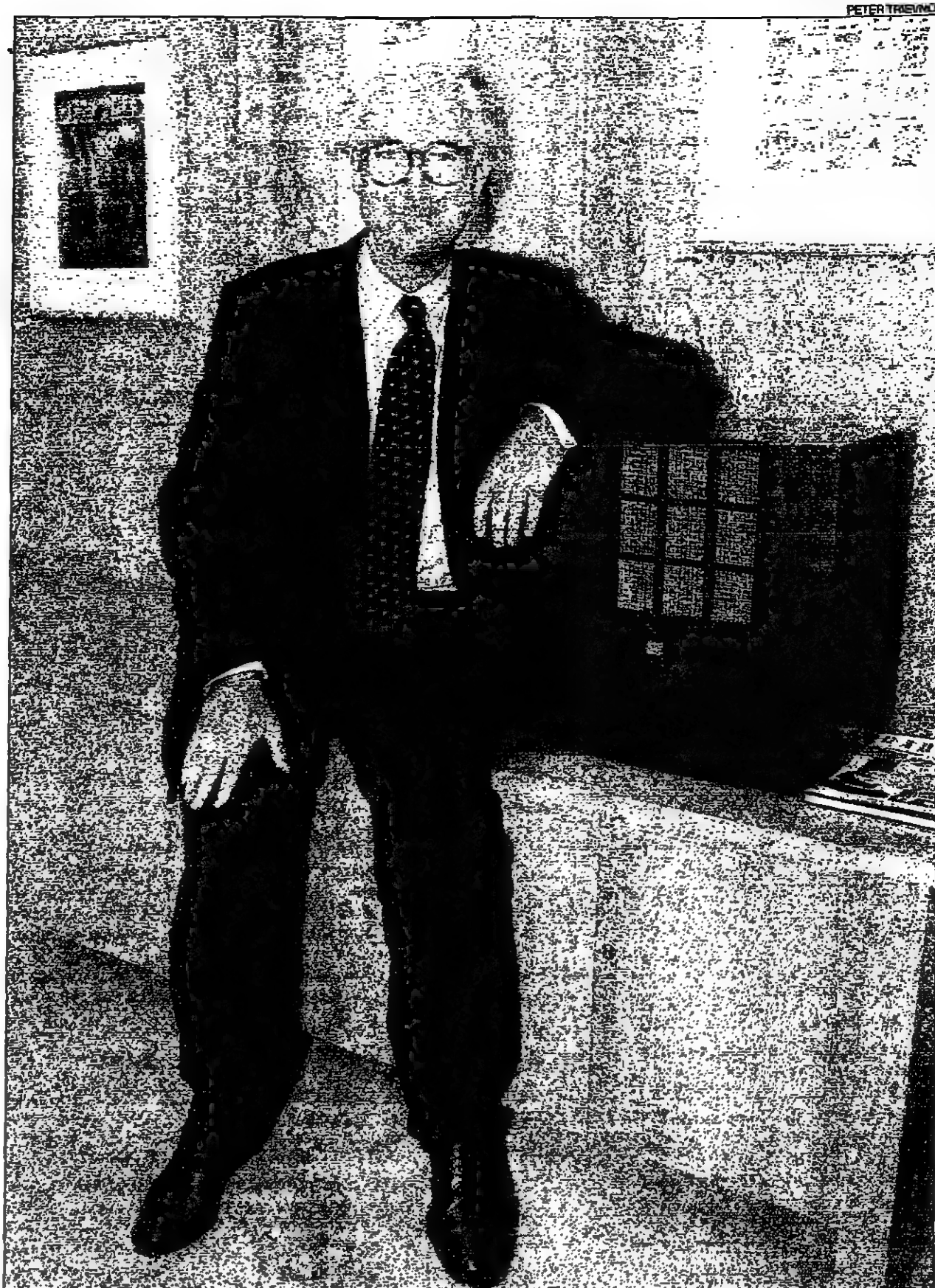
Oxford and invited friends to watch it. "They laughed all the way through."

In 1966 he applied for a traineeship to the BBC, but fell at the final selection. "I wonder what would have become of me if I had been accepted then as a BBC trainee?" he beamed. "I'd probably now be a major opponent of change."

Instead he went to Granada, thence to LWT. As a long-haired radical maverick, he wrote his paper *A Bias Against Understanding* (with Peter Jay) enraging Charles Curran, the then DG, who saw it as an attack on the BBC's news and current affairs. Now it is Birt who inhabits Lord Reith's splendid office, with its original paneling of lined oak. The table before us is bare except for Perrier glasses. The walls are festooned with archive pictures from *Radio Times*. "That's a Jean Cocteau," he said. "It's astonishing, what a treasure trove we have: Churchill's original handwritten war speeches, begging letters from Dylan Thomas, original scores from Elgar."

This, he says, is why he has been given an international prize: for the BBC as an institution, with all its heritage, facing a revolutionary future.

"Our programmes have always won prizes: last year we won prizes in all three categories in the Prix Italia. This prize is for the BBC itself," he said. "A great institution which is learning to maintain its essential role and purpose in a contemporary broadcasting environment." Then followed an extremely long



Thanksgiving: John Birt has much to be grateful for as he heads for New York to receive the "Directorate Emmy"

speech about the coming digital revolution, the BBC's pioneering role in public service broadcasting, emulated throughout the world, the challenge of having its Charter

imminently renewed and the redefining of the BBC's role: its support for national culture, the opportunity it gives to the best talents to innovate, and giving the public the best value for money.

When Birt arrived, his tough talk of productivity and profits sat uneasily with the shambolic but convivial old BBC style. But Mark Tully, the Delhi correspondent who voiced that memorable blast against Birtism and the "atmosphere of fear", told me he found Birt "a very good listener". Tully's complaint was that BBC management was "chillingly formalised"; Birtism seemed to be all nuts and bolts, but lacked heart and soul.

"It was," Birt says, "a huge shock to the system. Thousands of people were made redundant, and that's painful in any organisation, particularly in a creative one. But the gain has been an enormous impact on the airwaves and on screen. Despite the fact that our revenue's been flat since the late-1980s, we are able to pay people competitively and ex-

'Friends bought me a personal navigator for my birthday'

and our programmes and services." The licence fee, I am reminded, at 23p a day costs even less than *The Times*. Birt's day begins with the *Today* programme "like every other member of the professional middle-classes", with one eye on Breakfast TV news; it ends with the midnight news on Radio 4 in the homeward car. Despite everything, he achieves a balanced life. After Wednesday's seminar on taste and decency he was at Wembley with his son to see England's victory. In his box at the last night of the Proms he was caught on the front of *Private Eye*, waving the Union flag and lustily singing ("Role Birt-anna!") with his guests the Saatchis, the Majors, the Seitzes and Joanna Trollope. At weekends he and Jane retreat to the Wye Valley. Why Wales? "Price mechanism," he answered. "We set off when we first had a little disposable income, 30 years ago, to buy a detached cottage in Oxford, but they cost twice what we could afford, so we kept on along the M4 until we got to Brecon and found a modest

house. I came to love it. A very unsport part of the world." It is a scene Jane often paints: at her last exhibition the pictures sold out within the hour.

"I had the most marvellous experience in Wales this weekend," Birt enthuses. "Do you know about kites? I went to see the only colony of kites in northern Europe that's still flourishing: the RSPB has built a hide where they feed them in winter. So at a certain time of day these beautiful birds, a reddish colour with distinctive markings, very large, very acrobatic fliers, come down from the hills, and pick up the meat in their talons."

The public picture of Birt is of an odd cove. But although

long associated with dust-dry current affairs, he also produced fun programmes like *Nice Time* with Kenny Everett and Germaine Greer; he commissioned *Blind Date*. What about his disciplinary approach to diet and his passion for statistics? Does he wear a pedometer while walking?

"You are looking for evidence of crankiness," he said. "Well, I have a new toy. A consortium of friends clubbed together to buy me, for my fiftieth birthday, a personal navigator. It's a little thing, very similar in size to your tape recorder. Its antenna communicates with satellites and tells you exactly where you are, anywhere in the

world, to an accuracy of ten metres, giving an Ordnance Survey reading to six figures of longitude and latitude.

"It does all add up. I am an organised person," he says.

When we once played tennis, I recall that Birt has a very peculiar serve. "Very powerful," he flashed back. "I only play a handful of games a year. But I play football most Fridays for the pure pleasure of it" (in a team with Greg Dyke and Howard Davies).

Like Davies he went grey early — "I was 23 when a makeup artist complimented me on my 'streaking job'. And from that moment, I know I was appointed to jobs because I looked much older than my years." Is the suit Armani? "I never discuss trade names," he said. "But one of my favourite places is Harvey Nicks. I do take pleasure in shopping, just

'A high proportion of my friends made millions'

as one likes consuming media, and eating in restaurants, wherever one goes." He stood up, revealing an expansive waistband.

If Birt had stayed at LWT, where he spent 17 years, he would have enjoyed the fruits of Sir Christopher Bland's ingenious share scheme, and might, like him, own a chateau in France. "Since a very high proportion of my friends have become multi-millionaires, we have had a terrific opportunity to sample the lifestyle of the rich." Was this galling?

"Never look back. I've had a terrific life, at the centre of all the most interesting institutions in the world, involved in every dimension of our national life. I wouldn't swap that for anything. I live perfectly well. I have a nice house in London, a nice house in the country. I have no complaints." His daughter is in advertising, his son at the School for Oriental and African Studies reading Religious Studies.

Rumours abound about what he will do when his contract comes up for renewal in two years. It has been speculated that he might run the NHS. "I don't make career plans. Some people plot their lives on a chess board but life's never like that. The only time I ever applied for a job in my life was to run Channel 4. And I didn't get that."

"I spent 23 days on the road this spring visiting every part of the BBC and came back with a sense of exhilaration, of an organisation in fine creative health." And off he flew to collect one prize, and to sell another.

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Sex, Cynthia and shopping

Julia Llewellyn
Smith on
a writer 'too
funny
to be a girl'

Cynthia Heimel is unwell. The American author of *Sex Tips for Girls*, a book that I know off by heart and obey every word of, has spent the past week in London being sick in the English not the American way. The woman who is a cross between Dorothy Parker, Gloria Steinem and Marie Perle is half slumped over a restaurant table, bathed in a sweaty sheen and with the spaced-out expression of one who has been dragged prematurely from a sick bed.

It shouldn't be this way. Heimel, a self-confessed hedonist, whose books include *Get Your Tongue Out Of My Mouth I'm Kissing You Goodbye* and *If You Can't Live Without Me Why Aren't You Dead Yet?*, should trip into the restaurant in red high heels and order champagne. Instead she sips feebly at mineral water, pushes her Dover sole around her plate, lights up a Dunhill, then stubs it out after two puffs.

She is in London to launch her new book, *If You Leave Me Can I Come Too?* (Picador, £12.99). "I love it here," she says. "In the States they think of me as strange and alternative, but then over there, they won't show Patsy and Edina on network television. The big TV networks don't think they are positive role models. Here you all think I am perfectly normal. Well, normalish..."

Much of Heimel's advice comes straight from the world of *Ab Fab*. It was she, after all, whose tip for how to be blindingly beautiful was "never lead a sensible life (people who think the height of depravity is bidding two no trumps with only 15 points... invariably have stringy necks)", and who advocated the sex and drugs and rock'n'roll diet (cocaine and vitamins for a week).

Heimel is a rare thing, a feminist who uses wit as a weapon, who believes women should stop worrying about things trivial (mortgages, tax returns, international politics) and concentrate on things frivolous (buying dresses, drinking champagne).



Cynthia Heimel, author of *Sex Tips For Girls* and *If You Leave Me Can I Come Too?*, is back in love, and back shopping

Yet life has not worked out quite as well for Heimel as it might have. Today's 44-year-old with flu is very different from the 32-year-old author of *Sex Tips*. Then she was obsessed with pretty clothes; in her latest book there is a chapter called *Ode to Sweatpants*. Heimel today has messy hennaed hair, is dressed in a brown silk shirt and leggings, and has clearly not followed the sex and drugs diet for a while. "No more emeralds," she says cheerfully. "No more high heels." This, from the woman who advocated a pair of red stilettos for every occasion, is grim indeed.

What happened, Cynthia? "The 1980s happened," she sniffs. "The devil decade when everybody was into conspicuous consumption. When I said buy lots of dresses, it was when dresses cost \$300. Now you can't get a dress for less than \$3,000." Heimel grew up in the suburbs of Philadelphia, ran away

from home at 16 to be a flower child and was married with a baby by the time she was 20. She left her husband and took the baby to London for three years, then returned to New York, where she worked her way up from paste-up artist to star columnist on the *Soho Weekly News*. Now she lives in LA, which she says is a nightmare. "I've gained 30lb in stress there. I'd move to Britain if they'd ever relax the quarantine laws. I have six dogs, you see."

My illusions are shattered. My role model has turned into one of those women you see demonstrating on the quay at Brightlingsea. At which point Heimel starts looking mischievously around the dining room. "Let's see what I think of everyone," she mutters. "Instant hate," she says, gesturing at a young man with floppy blond

'When buying lingerie think filthy thoughts'

hair. "Looks retarded," she says of a senior executive of a national newspaper. "Now that," says the old hippy, predictably, of a rugged man in a plaid shirt, "is my type."

Heimel is warming up. She starts to tell me she is in love. He is a civil liberties lawyer, whom she started telephoning after he wrote a complimentary article about her. "We knew each other telephonically for about six months. Then he came to see me a month ago in Vancouver and I thought 'Omgod'. I've been talking to him four times a day."

She has been there several times before, to judge by her many musings on obsessive love ("If he calls in the next five minutes, I'll buy an aqua polyester double knit trouser suit and wear it every day for a week. One time offer. God, act now"). Heimel is a confirmed

serial monogamist; bitter experience has taught her that the dogs, her son and her beloved girlfriends will be there long after any man has gone.

"Do you want to go shopping?" she says suddenly, pushing her plate away. Minutes later we are at the Marble Arch Marks & Spencer ("Mecca," she cries) ploughing our way through the designer collections and twirling in front of the full-length mirrors. "Do they have it in a size 18?" Heimel inquires, fondling a brown, collarless jacket. "I don't need this in LA," she protests feebly as I force her into a black satin mackintosh. The old Heimel, the one who wrote a chapter on *How to Shop* ("When buying lingerie think filthy thoughts and think about men"), is re-emerging, charging down the aisles with a shopping trolley loaded with clothes. Conspicuous consumption, it seems, is acceptable if practised in Marks & Spencer. If things work out with this new chap Heimel may start wearing red heels again.

Kate Muir on how a statesman dropped his mask

Mitterrand prepares to meet his maker

Rumours erupt daily in Paris about the health of former President François Mitterrand, who is severely ill with cancer. Press agencies go on red alert and telephones buzz with: "He has been admitted to hospital. We hear that he is unable to leave his room. We hear he cannot get up or speak."

This week M. Mitterrand, nicely scotched this latest gossip by being photographed in *Paris Match* flying off to spend the weekend near St-Tropez. He defiantly took a stroll in the town's narrow streets, and when he felt out of breath took a short rest on a portable stool, not caring who watched. His wife, Danielle, said on radio: "He is courageous. He is fighting a very pernicious illness, but he is not doing too badly."

Unlike President Georges Pompidou, who pretended to have flu the day he died of cancer, M. Mitterrand has been absolutely honest about his health; France's longest-serving President is preoccupied not just with dying, but dying well.

M. Mitterrand may be mortal, but he is not ordinary. Most of all, he desires life after death, at least in history books.

"One thing really preoccupies me now: the opinion, not of my contemporaries, but of future historians," he said this year. He sees his death not as a monument to fear, but as the last resounding line in a singular life, from prisoner of war to Vichy collaborator to resistance fighter to half a century as a politician.

M. Mitterrand wants to be remembered as France's Socialist President of 14 years and a major architect of the European Community. As well as 15 books, he also leaves behind monuments: the I.M. Pei glass pyramid at the Louvre, the arch at La Défense, the Opera-Bastille. Commentators suggest that the venerated figure of de Gaulle is much on his mind: he aspires to similar fame.

M. Mitterrand has made his death a part of his political life. In his new year address he said: "I wish you long life at the end of my own. I shall not leave you in spirit, even though it is clear I must do so physically soon." That much is clear from a glance at M. Mitterrand, wrapped in a warm anorak, holding a stick, bones like scaffolding in his face, his eyes deep in wine-coloured sockets. One painful photograph showed his gaunt figure walking against a flow of shoppers, France's figurehead unrecognised.

Mitterrand's willingness to take death out of the closet. He hopes in his final political gesture to help to end the modern "deficient relationship with death in this hurried existence". Like the seasoned politician he is, he has once again identified the zeitgeist in France, where dying has become a subject of some debate. He wrote the foreword to the bestseller *La Mort Intime*, by the psychologist and hospice campaigner Marie de Hennezel. He writes: "How to die? We live in a world which is frightened by such a question: a world which avoids even asking it."

Mme de Hennezel, who met M. Mitterrand before his illness, has spent increasing time with him. He has been a regular visitor to her retreat near Uzès, a country house with no electricity, ideal for his growing contemplation of the spiritual. Blonde, in an exquisite grey suit and elegant jewellery, Mme de Hennezel has a warmth which brings out confession. In her Paris flat, she ponders whether M. Mitterrand has altered with the knowledge of mortality. "He has not changed in any spectacular way," she pauses. "He is a man who has always been aware of the suffering of others. Perhaps he has discovered more of his own concerns. But that may not be because of his health, more that he has time without the presi-

dency. As people face death, they need to be true to themselves, to drop masks." M. Mitterrand has recently dropped a few masks, co-operating with a biographer who revealed his involvement with Vichy, and being photographed publicly with his 20-year-old illegitimate daughter, Mazarine.

But he has been neither beatified nor sanitised by his impending death. His taste for the rituals of power has not diminished. He was accused of being "obsessed with his own self-importance" when he purchased a grave site in his old constituency—not in the simple cemetery of Chateau-Chinon in the Morvan, but instead on nearby Mount Beuvray, where France's hero Vercingetorix rallied the Gauls against the Romans.

Yet the grave site is beautiful, isolated in misty copper beech and oak woods, and detractors should note that M. Mitterrand at least showed modesty when asked to suggest his epitaph. He chose former German Chancellor Willy Brandt's: "I did what I could."



Mitterrand: unrecognised

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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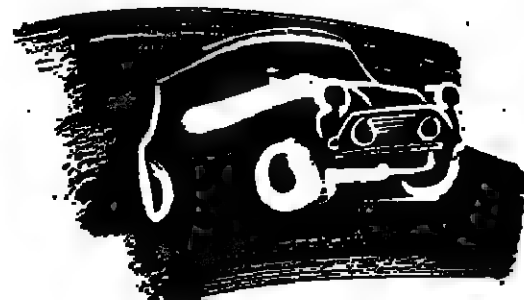
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Is this the way to save the countryside?

Magnus Linklater on the new rural civil war

Yesterday the countryside hit back. Faced with the mounting clamour of anti-blood sports campaigners and a climate of hostility towards almost every country pursuit from farming to forestry, a new body was launched to wrest back the centre ground of rural Britain. The Countryside Movement, headed by Sir David Steel, represents farmers and landowners as well as ordinary country people, and is an attempt to bridge what they see as a gulf of ignorance dividing the urban and the rural ways of life.

The very fact that a country movement should be thought necessary is a strange commentary on present-day attitudes. Do we not all love the countryside, praise its beauty, venture into it at weekends and make elaborate plans to retire to it? We buy large quantities of green wellington boots and Barbour coats to pretend that we are at heart a rural people. Why then should the debate about the country have become such a ferocious battleground?

The quick answer is that it has been seized by the radicals — the animal rights movement, the League Against Cruel Sports, the campaigners against factory farming and the transport of live animals. They have polarised the argument, with everything from blanket forestry to pesticides thrown in to add to a cauldron of suspicion, even hatred. A Britain that could once count on a broad measure of sympathy and understanding towards the country now sees it increasingly as a mono-chrome place where greedy farmers grub up hedges, breed mad cows and poison the land, while bloodthirsty sportsmen terrorise wild creatures and blast innocent birds from the skies.

The radicalism has caught on, not only with city-dwellers whose knowledge of country matters may be purely incidental, but with those who have moved out of town and take a proprietorial interest in their newly acquired territory. Defending field sports these days is a bit like arguing in favour of apartheid.

The growth of the anti-hunting vote in the House of Commons is just one indication that what was once a fringe campaign may now be a majority one, and could succeed in banning a sport that is part of traditional country life. The anti-hunting lobby's success suggests that support, and money, has flowed to the vociferous rather than the moderate. Financial backing for animal welfare organisations in Britain is vast. One estimate of their collective annual income is more than £50 million, and the reserves of the increasingly militant Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals have swollen to about £100 million. This

means that their advertising campaigns, which use searing images to touch on the raw nerve of cruelty to animals, are extraordinarily well-funded.

But the debate has subtly begun to change. An article in *Country Life* by Michael Sissons, the literary agent and countryman, argues that the distinction between animal welfare and animal rights has become blurred. He says the RSPCA has been taken over by activists determined to use it as a campaigning vehicle rather than simply as a charitable concern. "The politics of animal rights is New Age politics," he writes. "Many of its protagonists dislike public criticism and invariably counter it either by raising libel issues or rubbishing their critics. We should conduct a more mature and above all honest debate."

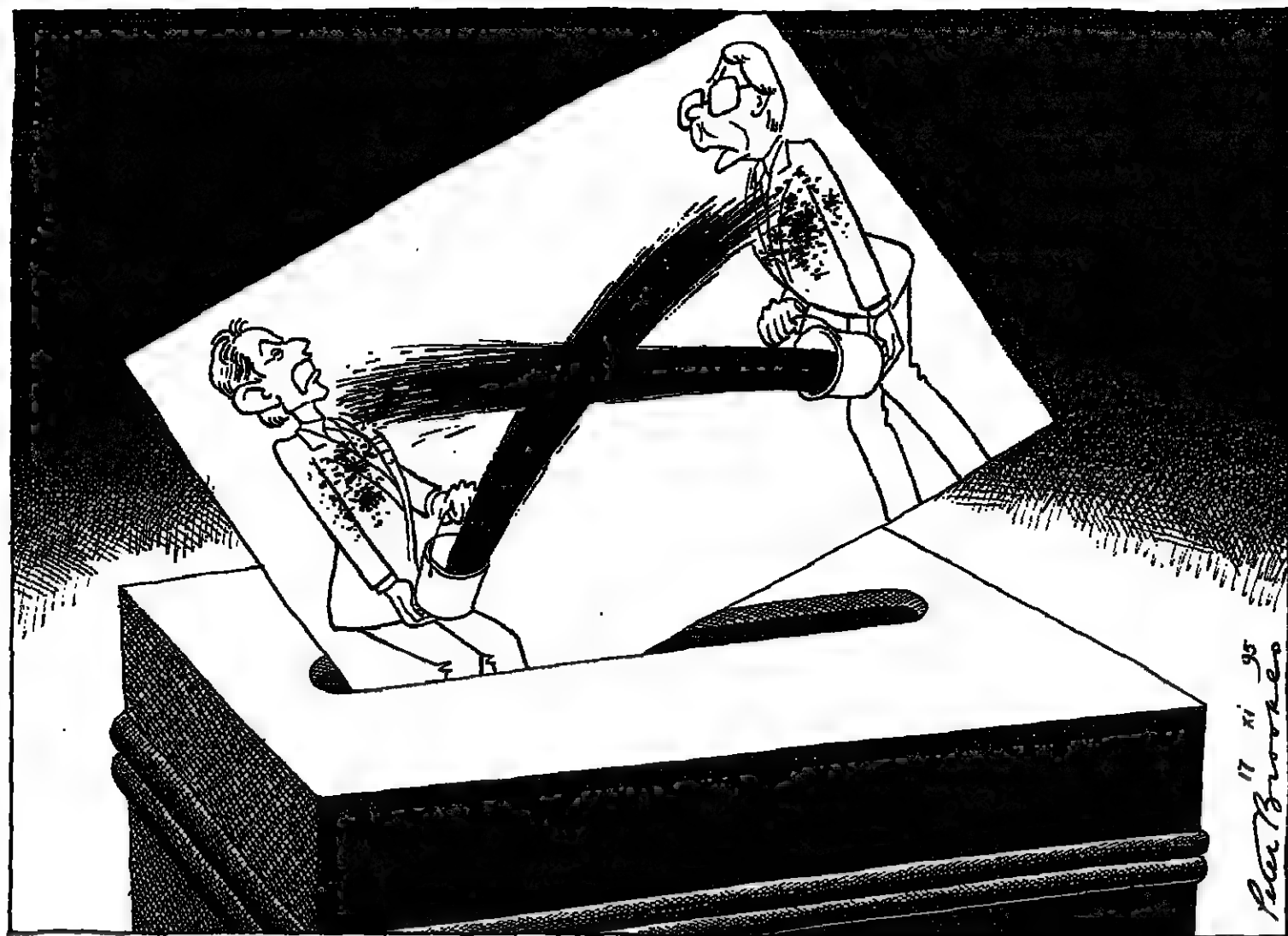
That is what the Countryside Movement aims to promote, but it has already been called "a Trojan horse for the promotion of blood sports" (*The Scotsman*) and "a desperate PR attempt to promote hunting" (*The Guardian*). The group has

Defending field sports is a bit like arguing for apartheid

been described as a collection of rich landowners determined to see off the anti-blood sports lobby. In fact, the movement claims to be as much concerned about dying villages and the conflict between agriculture and access as about blood sports. But one of the first things it will have to do is clarify its relationship with some of its own radicals. Eric Betteheim, an American lawyer living in Wiltshire, where he owns a shooting estate, is the founder of the Countryside Business Group (CBG), a fund-raising enterprise. He speaks of a war against the animal-rightists, whom he describes as "irresponsible... full of hatred for the essential elements of civilised democratic life".

Leading figures in the Countryside Movement, embarrassed by Mr Betteheim's emotive language, have discreetly distanced themselves from the CBG. But there is a problem: it has raised serious money. Mr Betteheim was quoted in the *Financial Times* as saying that he set out to raise £50,000 in six months and had succeeded in five weeks.

It would be a pity, however, if what is clearly a serious debate simply becomes an expensive form of mud-slinging. It is one thing to campaign against cruelty to animals, quite another to work out the complex balance between maintaining the countryside as we all like to see it, and recognising the way in which it has traditionally worked. That means in the first place understanding the country rather than vilifying it. So far, that case has not been cogently put. Philip Howard's column will appear tomorrow.



THE DIRTY WAR BEGINS

The £20 million question

Sir James Goldsmith is right to campaign for a referendum on the Maastricht treaty

Full-page advertisements in newspapers gladden the hearts of the owners of the papers, whether the ads are for motor-cars, television sets or sausages. But when the ad refers to a subject that might be called controversial, it takes time wise men — in cases of very controversial matter, 19 — to study the proposed ad and see whether it is fit for the papers' columns.

And so, when on the same day, all the broadsheet (or, as we call them, "posh") national papers — viz. *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent* — carried a full page, 25in high and 15in wide, announcing "The Referendum Party" together with its "Statement of Aims", the 99 wise men climbed out of their holes, and after they had sufficiently stroked their beards, they announced that there was nothing that stood in the way of the Referendum Party and its Statement of Aims. Whether the wise men shrugged as they left, no one can say.

I read through the 23 items in the call to arms, and my first conclusion was that whoever wrote it knows how to use the English language, and particularly when the writer is stopping every hole in the argument so that no reader, having read, can then say "Yes, but what about...?". Because every what about has already been foreseen. Yes, foreseen, but that does not mean that it will succeed. But at this point, I take sides.

The Referendum Party is not a joke that which costs £20 million is no joke and it is just possible that it might catch on. It makes immense sense that it has one, and only one aim: that is, to give the people of Britain the right to have a fair referendum on the Maastricht treaty. But why should the people of Britain not have a fair referendum? Nobody as yet in this business has answered that question in plain language, so I shall. The people of Britain are not to have a fair referendum — and in as one — because if such a referendum were held it would instantly be seen that the people of Britain are, and will continue to be, wholeheartedly against the treaty and what it means for us. A fair referendum would have an overwhelming majority against the treaty, and if Tory and Labour leaders are so convinced that that is not true, a referendum would settle it.

Which is where Sir James Goldsmith comes in. For it is his millions.

his newspaper advertisements and his Referendum Party that has sprouted in this country, as in other countries.

The question is: is the sprout going to turn into a full-size cabbage?

Now here, I must caution Sir James. I am wholeheartedly on his side, and I shall do what I can to help. But I, with somewhat fewer than 20 millions behind me, must tell him that the British people are almost incredibly rigid when it comes to changing their voting processes. You can see this most plainly in the sad fortunes of the Lib-Dems, who will never have more than a couple of dozen seats in the Commons. The truth is that we are a two-party country, and there is no sign of us changing that.

Sir James will say that his party is not going to do anything except urge a referendum, and taking sides doesn't come into it. No, but there is the other side of the British voter: however hoarse you become in telling him that you are doing something good for him, he will never believe it, unless the votes are going to be counted in millions. The Referendum Party will, in every constituency that the Referendum Party fought, have something like 500 votes and no more — not because they are no good, but because that is the way the British voter invariably votes. In that magnificent schedule that appeared in the full-page ads for the Referendum Party, there were two items that for me practically brought tears. One question was: "How many candidates will the Referendum Party field?", and the answer was: "The Referendum Party will field candidates in each parliamentary constituency in which the principal candidates of the major parties are not committed to a fair referendum on the Maastricht treaty and its proposed amendments." The other question was: "What happens if the Referendum Party were to obtain a majority in a general election?"

We would say such it and sue: but Sir James has bravely answered the

question, thus: "It is possible to pass a single piece of legislation in a matter of weeks. Therefore, a Referendum Act could be passed quickly and a fresh general election called immediately thereafter. In the interim a national Government would be formed whose members would be drawn from all political parties represented in the House of Commons."

Don't laugh, Sir James knows well enough that there is not going to be a Referendum Party landslide. But if anyone is giggling at such thoughts, another passage of his plea might find silence all round.

"It is almost impossible to find an issue more important to the nation than the Maastricht treaty and its amendments. Germany's governing party, the alliance

of the Christian Democrats and the CSU, last September published its vision of Europe. Since then, they have described their views publicly on numerous occasions. In effect, they believe that there should be a European supra-state into which would be fused all the nations of Europe. This state would have one Parliament, one Government, one Supreme Court of Justice, one currency. Most of the Christian Democrats in other European nations, including the British MEPs who are allied with the Christian Democrats, and most European Socialists support the general line of the German proposals."

This makes the flesh creep: well, it was supposed to. Sir James wants our flesh to creep, and to go on creeping until enough of us begin to understand what is happening to us and what will be the end of it. And there is a symbol close at hand: only a few weeks ago, we had the Government lying about the change to metrication, with no serious protest from Labour. (A word in Sir James's ear: "the Maastricht treaty" is, for most people, nothing but a succession of sounds. You must, in your next appeal to the voters, make much more clear what the treaty now means for us.)

That very remarkable man, Christopher Booker, who seems to have dedicated his life to tearing down the lies and madnesses — there are even more madnesses than lies — of Brussels and its ukases, only a few weeks ago revealed that Brussels has piled the heaps of commands so high that there are now — words, please, figures won't do — ten thousand. (Even I could not believe the number, and I had to check it, although Booker does not make such mistakes.)

Sir James Goldsmith has sensibly rationed himself to the referendum question, but at some time he might think about a link, albeit a hands-off one. Meanwhile, however, Sir James faces another problem. Suppose his tide rises, and more flock to his banner: who will take the knocks? Why, the Tories, of course. Remember that there are only a handful of Tory MPs between an outburst of influenza and a general election. And if there is a general election, it is the Tories who will be smashed and Labour who will have gigantic gains. But Labour, in its present form, is even less likely to give us a referendum.

But, at least, we have a Referendum Party, and if I joined anything (I don't), it would be the Referendum Party. I have pointed out some of its weaknesses, but statements like Sir James's are not to be taken literally: what he is saying is that the British people are being denied by both major parties the opportunity to act in their own regard. Nothing will come of nothing, think again, said Shakespeare, but our politicians are not even giving us the right to think for ourselves at all.

Some say that if we put up with these horrors now, we can change them if they do not turn out as we had hoped. To that, Sir James will say — and rightly — that that is the biggest mistake of all. If we do not break free now, we never will. That is why I tip my hat to Sir James; and why I applauded even more loudly when he was asked: "Why would Sir James spend all this money for no reason?" and replied: "The political leadership in both main parties are refusing a popular referendum. In effect, voters have been disenfranchised on an issue which will determine the nation's sovereignty and continued identity. There can be no better reason."

The case for divorce reform

Lord Mackay defends his new Bill

A successful marriage is surely the most satisfying of all relationships between human beings. To have such a marriage is a precious privilege and I strongly adhere to the view that marriage should be for life. I believe that a husband and wife with such an ideal provide the most stable and secure background for the birth and development of children.

Sadly, however, I recognise that the civil law must accommodate many situations which are less than ideal. It is my responsibility to try to provide the best framework of law to do this.

There have been some misapprehensions about how the current divorce legislation works. Under the present law, the sole ground on which divorce may be granted is that the marriage has broken down irretrievably. This may be established by reference to a number of facts. One of these is that one spouse has committed adultery and the other finds it intolerable to live with the party who has done so. Another is that one party has behaved in such a way that the other cannot reasonably be expected to live with that party. Neither of these requires the conduct in question to have been the cause of the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage. The court's judgment proceeds on the basis that the marriage has broken down irretrievably.

The effect of using one or other of these facts is that the divorce may be obtained much more speedily than if the breakdown is alleged on other facts. The only relevance of these allegations is to allow quick divorces.

In my view, and I have consulted widely with those with practical daily experience of these matters, we should acknowledge that the only ground for divorce which is appropriate is that the marriage has irretrievably broken down. The question then arises of what is the best method of establishing that this has happened. I believe the answer is that the couple should have an opportunity to seek to repair their marriage. I have proposed that the period for this should be one year. The result will be that no one can obtain a divorce in less than one year.

This will have two important benefits. First, everyone will know that no breakdown of marriage can be followed by divorce without a year elapsing. Hasty divorce will no longer be possible. Secondly, under the present system, when couples seek a speedy divorce they are encouraged to make allegations against one another. This very often has the result in practice of freezing them into antagonism. In most cases the breakdown of such an intimate relationship as marriage has the effect of causing severe distress and sadness to both partners. If not both of them, then at least one partner is going to feel hurt.

The period of one year will begin after an application by one or both parties to the court. This will state only that their marriage has broken down. The new system will enable them to approach their problems without the rancorous background of allegations made against one another. It will avoid unnecessary bitterness in the discussion of what has gone wrong in their marriage and, if they reach the sad conclusion that it cannot be healed, of what the future holds for them and their children. It is important to keep alive for as long as possible the prospect of reconciliation. In some cases at least, a clear view of what the future holds may lead the couple to turn back and see whether they can recover their relationship.

Such a system will enable couples to address all the relevant issues in a more satisfactory climate than under the present system. I am proposing that mediation should be available and that where public funds are being used, mediation should be the preferred route where it is appropriate. There are, of course, circumstances in which mediation would be quite inappropriate. I have never suggested that mediation should be compulsory. Where legal advice is needed, then it is right that it should be available. But I think the issues between husband and wife are usually best addressed by themselves with such help as can be given to them.

I am proposing that the power of the court to refuse to grant a divorce where one person shows that the result will be grave financial or other hardship will now be available in respect of all divorces. At present, it does not apply in respect of fault-based or consent divorces. I also propose that steps should be taken to ensure that anyone seeking a divorce has full information about all the services available to help. This will include not only mediation services but also services that may help them to effect a reconciliation.

The Family Law Bill is intended to deal with an important problem in our national life. I believe the Government has a duty to do so. The Government is obviously ready to consider any improvements that can be made. In that the Bill deals with matters of conscience, it is right that a free vote should apply.

Lord Mackay of Clashfern is the Lord Chancellor

Cream puff

DELIA SMITH caused a run on cranberries earlier this year after including them in a popular recipe. Now Dame Barbara Cartland appears to have been responsible for a shopping stampede to health stores for a wrinkle cream.

Her royal pinkness, 94, said in a television documentary last week-end that she used a product called Ayesha's Flame to protect her from the ravages of age. She claimed that the treatment, a combination of pills and cream, gave her the arms of an 18-year-old girl.

Stores stocking Ayesha's Flame, a calcium-based product, are in trouble. Holland & Barrett, the main supplier, says sales have doubled since the documentary, although the "flame" costs £7.99 a throw. "We have been selling it for several years but now supplies are running out," said a spokeswoman.

Over lunch at the Four Seasons hotel in London yesterday, for which she sported a bright pink ostrich-feather hat, Dame Barbara showed off her wrinkle-free arms and once again ascribed their fine state to the calcium product. "My legs are just the same, you see," she said breezily. "It's extraordinary."

● Kenneth Branagh has explained his blond ambitions. He turned up at the premiere of his film *In The Bleak Midwinter* sporting a bleached barnet. "It's out of a bottle," he said. "I'm experimenting for *Hamlet*. I think the melancholy Dane could lighten up."

Exit visa

SKATING in Central Park and browsing in Barneys may be out of

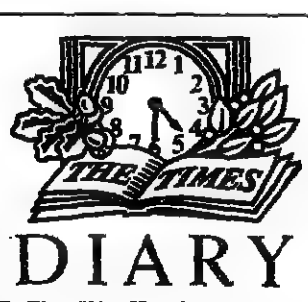


the question for anyone who wants to spend Christmas in the US. For the first time ever, the American Embassy in London has stopped issuing passports and visas "due to a lapse in funding for non-essential US government services". The live operator information service has also been suspended, and the answer machine continues: "Individuals not eligible for visa-free travel, and faced with travel for serious life or death emergencies, should fax the details of their request." But it adds: "Please note that calls to this number are charged at 39 pence per minute cheap rate, and 49 pence at all other times."

False dawn

JIM NAUGHTIE, the presenter of Radio 4's *Today* programme, is an early riser but last week his dawn starts appeared to have caught up with him. He had arranged to meet Keri Thomas, his producer, very early one morning in a hotel lobby where they were staying in Germany.

Thomas didn't appear so Naughtie phoned his room: there was no response so he went up to wake him. When he got to the room, which was in some disarray, Thomas was nowhere to be seen and Naughtie tore downstairs thinking the worst — that Thomas



had disappeared. Happily, he discovered the man waiting in the lobby. And realised that he hadn't phoned or searched Thomas's room at all. He had confused it with his own.

What a Pitty

IT HAS long been a source of chagrin to girls at Cambridge University that its most famous dining society, the Pitt Club, has an all-male membership. So this term the Cambridge Ladies Dining Society was formed by female undergraduates. Little pink invitations fluttered around the university advising guests to turn up at Ramsey Hall in Magdalene College with a bottle of sparkling white wine for the inaugural cocktail party on Wednesday night. Unfortunately, no one booked the hall.

"Everyone turned up in their party frocks but were told to go away," sneers a Pitt Club member.

Praise indeed

THE JOURNALIST behind the *Panorama* interview of the Princess of Wales, Martin Bashir, emerged from hiding yesterday to give a press conference in which he admitted that this was not his first brush with fame. When making a film in Cornwall three years ago, Bashir, who enjoyed his biggest audience when he presented *Songs of Praise*, was approached by an autograph hunter.

"I said 'Well, if you really want my autograph you can have it.' And she said, 'Yes, I've seen you on television. You're Johnny Mathis.'"

Have a go

THE RUTLAND MP Alan Duncan's spirited attempt at a citizen's arrest over hooligans threw paint over the Tory party chairman Brian Mawhinney on Wednesday was not his first scuffle.

As president of the Oxford Union in 1979, he caught a shiner in a left-wing demonstration. On the campaign trail with Jeffrey Archer as Tory candidate for Barn-



Duncan: mobile minder

ley West and Penistone, someone shoved their finger up his nose. He was involved in a dust-up with hunt saboteurs in Leicestershire. And only recently he berated Lord Nolan in front of the television cameras. "I was bloodied at the age of 12," he swaggers. "For beating up the school bully."

P.H.S



JUPPÉ THE BOLD

France embarks on a serious test of political courage

Overnight, France gives every appearance of having acquired at last the vigorous reforming Government which its voters believed they were electing last May. There is a risk that Alain Juppé's blitzkrieg on France's bankrupt social security system will founder in massed social protest. But as presented, this is the first serious reform to be attempted in France for decades. M Juppé's fiscal and political timidity in the face of pressure groups was the surprise of his first months in office: now, with a leaner team in place, he has surprised again — this time, by his audacity. France's political horizons are opening out just as Britain's, after this year's most modest of Queen's Speeches, are fading into the mist of pre-electoral manoeuvre.

The welfare battleground on which the French Prime Minister has placed his standard is as good a test of political courage as there is for Western democracies. The argument about how best to reform social security has closed down the American Government; Britain, as Peter Lilley knows and constantly says, faces hard choices too which an energetic, confident Conservative Government would be putting more starkly to the electorate than John Major dares. M Juppé's progress will be closely watched.

The great merit of his strategy is to attack the welfare incubus in its entirety: its cost, its cost and its runaway entitlements, particularly in the health sector. It will put the structure on a new, financially sustainable and democratically accountable footing. Hitherto, control has been vested in a council made up of employers, unions and doctors which has airily forced up spending with no regard to the burden placed on state finances. The new council will be subject to parliament, which will set national spending ceilings. Next year, the social security deficit will be cut by £6.2 billion; by 1997, the budget will swing into surplus. The debt accumulated by the system, which at £33 billion is a measure of the burning need for these reforms, is to be repaid over 13 years

through a special levy. Most encouragingly of all, in a break with French bureaucratic habit, he has put more emphasis on cutting costs and eliminating waste than on increasing charges and taxes.

Provided that the Prime Minister holds firm, the impact of these reforms will therefore be as strong and as beneficial in political terms as it is to the French economy. But the proviso has to be entered, because a frontal assault on the cost of France's sacred *Sécu* was not M Juppé's instinctive preference. His September budget was notable for plugging the holes in the State's finances by raising taxes rather than cutting spending; and at that time, he suggested that a lengthy national debate on welfare would be needed before the knife fell.

In the event, M Juppé not only brought forward the timetable but marshalled the entire Centre-Right behind the package in a vote of confidence which triumphantly affirmed his leadership. Yet bizarrely, within hours of the vote the Prime Minister almost seemed to invite the unions to do their worst. Everything, he said, depended on the next three months: if two million people took to the streets, "my Government will not survive". If he intended this as a threat, there are plenty of union activists who will treat it as a promise.

President Chirac knows that the time to cut deep, hard and fast is now, when he is fresh in office — and that a wasted summer has cost both him and M Juppé dear in public respect. Success would open the way to much-needed cuts in French interest rates and would create the momentum for the next great reforms, in tax and education. It will be a hard winter: these reforms will be unpopular with the public sector, some of whose perks are at stake. The first sign that Juppé the cautious technocrat still lurks behind the countenance of Juppé the Bold will be M Chirac's moment to lay to rest persistent doubts that he will hold course when the political going gets really rough.

RURAL RIGHTS

The challenge facing the Countryside Movement

The launch of the Countryside Movement yesterday added a welcome voice to the debate on the future of rural Britain. Headed by Sir David Steel, the objective of this new pressure group is to represent the interests of the countryside in Westminster, Whitehall and Brussels, as well as to the media and public. It aims "to protect countryside life from its detractors and to promote good practice in all aspects of countryside management". Few would quarrel with such an objective. The more interesting question is why such a body is felt to be necessary.

It is clear that the wish to defend blood sports has played an important part in this venture. Hunting enthusiasts are well aware of the difficulties they face if Labour gains office; even on the Tory back benches, support for fox-hunting is no longer as reliable or visceral as it used to be. The new body — a coalition of existing countryside groups backed by sympathetic businessmen — will doubtless make a strong case for the defence of this traditional English liberty.

Yet the Countryside Movement is capable of being much more than a single-issue lobby group. There is a whole range of problems which it can usefully address, some of them raised by last month's White Paper on rural England. Country dwellers face rising house prices, poor quality public transport, declining agricultural employment and general degradation of their environment. They resent the encroachments of urban culture and Brussels alike. The movement claims that an area of countryside five times the size of Watford is urbanised every year. There could be no better moment for the emergence of a lively new representative for those affected by this process.

The founders of the movement recognise

the scale of the challenge facing them. The lobby for animal rights and against hunting and livestock husbandry has never been stronger. Between them, the League Against Cruel Sports and the International Fund for Animal Welfare are thought to raise £50 million a year in this country. The demonstrations against veal trucks at Shoreham and Brightlingsea have won unprecedented publicity for this already powerful lobby. Once the preserve of anarchists and left-wing extremists, animal rights campaigning has become a respectable pursuit for middle-class city dwellers who find the tough realities of rural life and farming morally shocking.

In large part, it is alarm at this new moral ascendancy that has prompted rural groups to join forces. Angling's governing bodies have tended to distance themselves from the pro-hunting lobby. But recent physical attacks on salmon fishermen by activists have persuaded anglers that they have more in common with huntsmen than they thought. The issue of animal rights is polarising British opinion to an extent that could not have been foreseen five years ago. The worst prospect is that it will become to Britain what abortion is to America: a moral problem that provokes blind fury, rancour and sometimes violence.

This should be avoided at all costs. The management of the countryside and the nation's farms raises important ethical issues. But they must not be resolved by intimidation, clamour and moral hysteria. Nor is it healthy for the debate to be dominated by one side, as it threatens to be. In this sense, the launch of the Countryside Movement may be as good for democracy as it promises to be for rural people.

ROAD HOGS

Never happier than when behind the wheel

The British have become a nation addicted to the motor car. According to a survey published yesterday by the RAC, we are increasingly wedded to them, even for the shortest of distances. Too lazy to walk or bicycle, the proportion of short journeys taken by car has doubled in the past 20 years.

The survey finds that while a fifth of car journeys are absolutely necessary, because there is no alternative, the other 80 per cent are more a matter of choice. Convenience clearly plays a large part, though while it is easy to jump into a car at home, it is often harder to park legally at the other end. Children are a factor too: any parent who has struggled to get a child, a baby and a buggy on to a bus and to pay for a ticket while an irate queue curses behind will endeavour not to have to repeat the experience. Safety and privacy are also important for many drivers, as is the use of a car to carry heavy shopping even for short distances. But none of these factors can justify so many of us using our cars for trips of less than a mile.

The change matters, because short journeys add greatly to traffic congestion. When roads are close to capacity, small amounts of extra traffic can create serious jams. During the morning rush hour, 12 per cent of car journeys involve taking children to school; their effects can be seen in the smoothness with which the traffic runs during half-term. Pollution is also a disproportionate

problem with short journeys, since a car emits its most noxious fumes before the engine has had a chance to warm up.

When people are asked about using their car for very short journeys, the researchers report that "they comment on their own behaviour with a sort of slightly puzzled humour, or some self-criticism". The survey suggests that this may "reflect the growth of habit or unthinking, almost automatic use of cars, rather than careful choice".

But it may also reflect attitudes towards the alternatives. In towns and cities, pavements have become denuded as more pedestrians take to their cars. Too many people now distrust the pavements as polluted, isolated and unsafe. The result is that they are reluctant to let their children walk unaccompanied to school. While in 1971 80 per cent of English seven and eight-year-olds were allowed to travel to school on their own or with other children, the figure had dropped to under 10 per cent by 1990.

So what is to be done? More reliable public transport would be a start. Better town planning would help to bring workplaces and schools within easy walking distance of homes. And the millennium money won by Sustrans to build traffic-free cycle and pedestrian paths may encourage more parents or children to take to their feet. In the end, though, we all need to ask ourselves each time: is this car journey really necessary?

Labour's proposals for A levels face examination

From Lord Walton of Detchant

Sir, I was saddened to read Terence Kealey's column today, headed "Blair fails the test on A levels".

For the past four years I have been privileged to chair the Hamlyn Foundation National Commission on Education, sponsored by the Royal Society, the British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Evidence from these and from innumerable other bodies agreed almost unanimously that A levels had passed their "sell-by" date.

They were condemned for their narrowness, breeding a generation of potential arts graduates who were likely to be scientifically illiterate, and scientists with little understanding of language, the arts and the humanities.

Perhaps above all, any system creating up to 20 per cent of failures cannot be acceptable when all too many young people, after two years of advanced study, fail to achieve a recognised qualification.

The commission's first report, *Learning to Succeed* (November 1993), and its follow-up, *Learning to Succeed — The Way Ahead* (June 1995), contain details of our proposed modular general education diploma. This would embrace, for those properly qualified and motivated, modules preserving the academic rigour of the A levels (but with a requirement of additional breadth) as well as the so-called vocational qualifications (NVQ and GNVQ).

It would also give young people a "fast-track" academic option, the opportunity to study a combination of academic and vocational topics if they so preferred, and a system of credit accumulation and transfer for those undertaking part-time education and training while in employment.

The commission is a body embracing all shades of political opinion. I myself am not and have never been a Labour Party member; as a cross-

bench peer I feel free to support the policies of any political party, as appropriate. But in this specific instance, I believe that Mr Davies and Mr Blair have got it right.

Yours faithfully,
WALTON OF DETCHANT,
House of Lords,
November 15.

From Mrs Moira Marland

Sir, Seemingly not satisfied with having destroyed the grammar schools (although, to be fair, the Tories have done nothing to restore them because they never used to destroy) Labour now seems hell-bent on destroying A levels (report, November 14), which are the sole surviving beacons of educational excellence.

The whole Labour education philosophy seems to be that "if children find some subjects hard, they must be made easier for all".

Yours sincerely,
MOIRA MARLAND,
12 St Martin's Avenue,
Epsom, Surrey,
November 14.

From Professor Stephen Prickett

Sir, I note with some alarm your report that Labour would "phase out" A levels, while maintaining their "rigour" in any replacement. It is not clear what rigour might mean in this context — beyond being, of course, a politically reassuring hurrah-word. I would like to suggest, more precisely, that what is valuable in A-level English, at least, is not so much any particular content as that candidates are encouraged to think for themselves.

Present experience suggests that to think of "standards" in terms mainly of curriculum content (not to mention documenting and monitoring the teaching) means that information is delivered to the student in ever more pre-digested and packaged forms, tacitly encouraging the production of

acceptable "model" answers — and thereby diminishing the real value of any academic exam.

Broadening the curriculum — in particular to include more modern language teaching — is welcome; but not at the cost of persuading our brightest students that it is dangerous to be original.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN PRICKETT,
University of Glasgow,
Department of English Literature,
Glasgow G12 8QQ,
November 14.

From Mrs Katie Ivens

Sir, Mr Bryan Davies, Labour's further and higher education spokesman, is quoted as saying that while he recognises "the value of A levels... excellence cannot be offered to a minority and denied to so many. All learners have a right to high standards". A levels, he concludes, must therefore be eventually abolished.

I detect that "new" Labour's Mr Davies has fallen into an old socialist trap. He confuses equality of opportunity with equality of outcome: since A levels are denied to all but the academic they must be unjust and replaced with a mish-mash qualification attainable by all.

This is educational as well as political nonsense. If A levels are as valuable as he says they should be retained. What are needed, however, are additional qualifications which will attest excellence in non-academic disciplines. Yet even these will not dispense the equality of excellence which Mr Davies believes should be available to all. There is no right to excellence of achievement.

Yours truly,
KATIE IVENS
(Vice Chairman,
Campaign for Real Education),
49 Ordinance Hill, NW8,
November 14.

Bill to set water industry to rights

From the Chief Executives of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

Sir, The latest episode in the water saga unfolded this week when Yorkshire Water conceded to public pressure to pay its customers compensation for cutting off supplies (report, November 15). Also, the official water regulator, Ofwat, publicly carpeted three water companies and others have lost their Charter Marks (report, November 16) because of mounting concern over the service they provide.

There has been palpable public outrage this year that so little has been done by the water industry and Ofwat to stem the massive loss of water through leakage — half a million gallons every minute of every day. Opinion polls reveal huge public support for mandatory leakage targets.

Rising demand together with massive leakage is placing long-term pressure on the rivers and wetlands which are vital to our wildlife. A solution is needed which does not jeopardise public health.

Our organisations are jointly promoting a Private Member's Bill on water conservation. The Bill would introduce mandatory leakage targets for water companies, encourage the installation of water-efficient devices in homes, and set up a review of water abstraction licences, which affect important wildlife sites.

These proposals have cross-party and wide support. We hope that an MP will agree to take up this Bill, which will benefit both consumers and the environment.

Yours faithfully,
BARBARA S. YOUNG,
Chief Executive, RSPB,
MICHAEL COOKE,
Chief Executive,
Chartered Institute of
Environmental Health,
The Royal Society for
the Protection of Birds,
The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire,
November 16.

Tax efficiency

From the Deputy Chairman of the Inland Revenue

Sir, In his "Audit" column ("Why taxpayers need a Mr Nice Guy", November 9), Robert Bruce repeated the contention, made in the recent Philip Hardman lecture by David Goldberg, QC, that because the Inland Revenue seeks to act like a "business with customers", we must regard our job as to collect the maximum amount of tax we can.

That is a complete nonsense. The Inland Revenue (like all government departments) has to be run in a cost-effective manner. That does not make us a business in the strictly commercial sense. Nor do we have customers in the market sense, but "customers" is a convenient shorthand, as well as a constant reminder to us of our responsibilities.

We emphatically do not aim to maximise turnover. Our job is to collect the right amount of tax within the law. That, of course, occasionally brings us into dispute with those who try by various means to pay less than the law requires, or those who, on technical grounds, disagree with our view. But there are proper, independent, procedures which people with a grievance can follow, if they wish.

We aim to provide an effective, efficient and fair tax service. Whether Mr Goldberg's proposals would help us to achieve that is for others to judge. But his proposals are based on a seriously defective view of what we are about.

Yours faithfully,
C. W. CORLETT,
Deputy Chairman, Inland Revenue,
Somerset House, WC2,
November 13.

Oyster scarcity

From Mr D. G. Edwards

Sir, The Slipper Limpet and the Whelk Tangle are blamed by your correspondents for the decline of our oyster population (letters, November 13 and 16). More often temporary shortages have arisen due to rough weather at sea.

On December 29, 1927, the poet and classicist A. E. Housman wrote to his brother Basil:

I have had a terrible shock from a telegram today from a London fishmonger. All of the native oysters have been torn from their beds by tempest, and I shall have to eat the New Year in on Dutch. For me it therefore opens gloomily... (A.E.H. *Some poems, some letters and a personal memoir by his brother, Laurence Housman*, Cape, 1957).

Yours sincerely,
DAVID EDWARDS,
Briar Cottage,
Julian Road, Ludlow, Shropshire,
November 16.

From Dr Terence Williams

Sir, Mr Jon Miller (letter, November 14) could well have expanded on the nature of *Crepidula fornicata*. This limpet has the interesting habit of piling itself in vertical columns, each individual copulating with its neighbour — hence the specific name "fornicata".

This no doubt accounts for the formidable reproductive rate of the species and its disastrous effect on British oysters.

Yours sincerely,
T. D. WILLIAMS,
4 Warren Park,
West Hill, Ottery St Mary, Devon,
November 14.

Colin Powell proposed for Nato post

From Mr Alan Lee Williams and Professor Geoffrey Lee Williams

Sir, Your trenchant leader of November 11, "A Dutchman derailed", is absolutely right to assert that transatlantic relations are being conducted by the US in a "superficial and chaotic manner". The rejection of Mr Ruud Lubbers, the former Dutch Prime Minister, was astonishing, given that it is transparently obvious he would have made a heavy-weight Secretary-General of Nato. He is a powerful advocate of a renewed transatlantic alliance in the years that lie ahead.

Perhaps the time has now come for the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to be a European general and for the post of Secretary-General of Nato to go to an American.

Can we therefore suggest that President Clinton makes an early approach to General Colin Powell to see whether he would be prepared to take on the crucial task at Nato in its hour of

need? The search for a European SACEUR should not prove all that difficult, given the surfeit of European — especially British — generals with the necessary experience and leadership skills.

It must be frankly recognised that Nato-Europe, together with the Western European Union, must provide the primary basis for European defence, with the United States playing a secondary role in the light of its failure to assert a more reasoned leadership role in the former Yugoslavia. The need for a new transatlantic contract has never been more urgent.

Yours etc,
ALAN LEE WILLIAMS
(Director),
GEOFFREY LEE WILLIAMS
(Senior Research Fellow),
The Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom,
8A Lower Grosvenor Place, SW1,
November 13.

Cost of divorce

From Dr John Campion

Sir, I have just completed a questionnaire survey of 2,000 divorced men for the charity Families Need Fathers (letters, November 2, 7, 11) and have published some preliminary data based on the first 100 responses which tends to support the view this organisation has received over 20 years.

Of the respondents, 91 per cent did not wish their families to be broken up but only 15 per cent had custody or joint custody of their children; 34 per cent had no contact at all with their children due to obstruction by former wives and/or their new boyfriends; 83 per cent reported that the consequences of the divorce in terms of loss of their homes and children had caused them significant stress and in 34 per cent of cases this was severe enough to be judged "clinical" — that is warrant-

ing medical or counselling intervention often coupled with loss of work for significant periods or early retirement. One respondent said that in losing his home and children and living in a 6 ft by 8 ft bed he would be "better off dead".

The study by the Centre for Family Research at Cambridge University on the effects of divorce on children (article, May 2) reported that divorce was worse than the death of the parent, and a recent Mori poll (report, November 15) found that 34 per cent of 10-17 year old children "worried a lot" about the possibility of their parents splitting up.

Yours etc,
JOHN CAMPION
(Co-ordinator),
The Cheltenham Group,
Cross Winds,
Carron Lane, Midhurst, West Sussex,
November 14.

Keeling House

From the Chairman of the National Heritage Fund

Sir, The Heritage Fund's decision about the Peabody Trust's application to restore Keeling House in east London (Sir Denis Lasdun's letter of November 15) does not mean that we will not fund applications to restore modern buildings of heritage merit. For example, last year we helped the National Trust to acquire 2 Willow Road in Hampstead — Erno Goldfinger's house, dating from 1939 — with a grant of £200,000.

In the case of Keeling House, after considerable thought, advice and a site visit, we were concerned about the economics of the scheme and the value for money that would have been achieved. In addition, the proposed partnership funding between ourselves and others (9 per cent of the total project cost) was too low.

Yours faithfully,
ROTHSCHILD, Chairman,
National Heritage Memorial Fund,
10 St James's Street, SW1.

Business letters, page 29
Sports letters, page 43

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

BR stock for sale

From Mr Peter Gelliot

Sir, Your report today (later editions) concerning the sale of British Rail's passenger stock mentions that there will be no outstanding orders for trains after next year's delivery of 164 Networker Express units for the services from King's Cross and Victoria.

Alas, the delivery will, in fact, consist of a mere 41 units, each of four cars, ie 164 carriages, of which 25 will be allocated to King's Cross and just 16 to Victoria.

I do not know what is intended for the 25, but here in Kent the proven need is to replace a minimum of 120 units dating from the 1955 to 1961 period, totalling 480 carriages.

The Networkers have a higher top speed than their predecessors, but until enough of them are available to run the entire service, opportunities to realise their benefits will be severely restricted.

I find the benefits of privatisation are, at present, hidden deep; but if, in future, procurement decisions are taken by managers and engineers and not by politicians it may, in the end, be worthwhile.

Yours faithfully,
PETER GELLIOT,
Ferrets Croft,
Long Mill Lane, St Mary's Platt, Kent,
November 10.

Auckland's appeal

From Mrs M. Symonds

Sir, I was distressed to read your article on Auckland, New Zealand ("A city slightly more interesting than Luton", November 9), which I found gratuitously offensive.

I am in no position to compare the two places, never having been to Luton, but Auckland has breathtaking coastal scenery, numerous lovely parks and public gardens (some on extinct volcanoes) and many other places to visit, including a magnificent museum built as a memorial to the many New Zealanders who gave their lives in defence of a continent at the other side of the world.

Yours faithfully,
MYFANWY SYMONDS,
82 Pilgrims Way East,
Otford, Sevenoaks, Kent,
November 11.

Royal interview

From Mr David Horner

Sir, National Lottery money must be used immediately to purchase the *Panorama* tape from the BBC. I cannot wait until next Monday.

Yours etc,
DAVID HORNER,
18 Trafalgar Road,
Shoeburyness, Essex,
November 16.

NEWS

Queen Mother's hip replaced

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was recovering in a London hospital after having her right hip replaced. Buckingham Palace said the 90-minute operation had been a success and that the Queen Mother was making a good recovery.

Although frail, the Queen Mother appears well for her 95 years, but over the past few months she has shown increasing difficulty in walking. Pages 1, 8

Dive in inflation uplifts Tories

Tory MPs banking on a Budget boost were lifted by figures showing a surprise fall in inflation and a sharp improvement in the public finances. Senior ministers hailed the news as enhancing the prospects for Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to introduce a tax-cutting Budget. Page 1

Today closes

Today, Britain's first high-tech newspaper, full colour national daily newspaper, is to close, after years of heavy financial losses and declining sales. Pages 1, 2

Coma girl's heart

A young woman was recovering in Papworth Hospital after being given the heart of Leah Betts, who died as a result of taking an Ecstasy tablet. Pages 1, 5

Labour rail promise

A Labour government would not bring privatised rail passenger franchises back into public ownership immediately. They would be allowed to run the length of the seven-year contracts. Page 2

Painting the town

Three students accused of throwing paint at Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, were enjoying their fame at the college where two are studying. Page 3

West trial

A judge warned jurors in the trial of Rosemary West that they would need cool heads, putting aside prejudice and sentiment, in deciding whether she is guilty of ten murders. Page 3

Country voice

A pressure group was launched to counter what its promoters see as the growing hostility towards rural life by an urban population ignorant of the realities of the countryside. Page 7

High-tech driving licence agreed

British drivers could soon choose to carry high-tech licences containing electronically stored personal data. The European Parliament voted by 116 to 114 to endorse a proposal by the European Commission to launch the "credit-card" licences as an optional alternative to the new cardboard Euro-licence scheduled to come into use next July. Page 1

Cities in crisis

Britain's cities are at "crisis point" and efforts to regenerate them have had little tangible impact, says a church report. Page 10

Threat to Nigeria

Britain could take tougher action against Nigeria after last week's hanging of nine minority-rights activists, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, Malcolm Rifkind hinted. Pages 12, 17

Murder re-enactment

The self-confessed assassin of Yitzhak Rabin re-enacted his role in the killing of the Israeli Prime Minister. As police cameras filmed the events at the scene of the crime, angry onlookers gathered. Page 13

German left turn

The German opposition leader, Rudolf Scharping, was stripped of his job as chairman of the Social Democrats and replaced by an emotional left-wing populist. Page 14

Algeria votes

Election fever blew like a cold wind through the militants' heartland on the hill above Algiers. Page 15

Expensive snub

Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, said that his position on the budget had hardened because of President Clinton's snub during the journey to and from Yitzhak Rabin's funeral. Page 16



Flowers are carried into the King Edward VII Hospital yesterday after the Queen Mother had a hip operation there. Pages 1, 8

BUSINESS

Economy: Inflation fell last month from 3.9 per cent to 3.2 per cent, the biggest October fall for 51 years. The Government also enjoyed a bigger than expected net debt repayment of £1,262 million. Page 25

Flying high: Boeing and McDonnell Douglas are in talks over a merger that would create the world's largest aerospace company and threaten to steamroller the competition. Page 25

Legal & General: Around 1.4 million "with-profits" policyholders are to share a £160 million special bonus. Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 rose 39.4 to 3610.8. Sterling's index rose to \$2.77 after a fall from \$1.5575 to \$1.5535 but a rise from DM2.1863 to DM2.1925. Page 28

SPORT

Cricket: Michael Atherton and Graeme Hick shared a fourth-wicket partnership of 142 to help England to reach 221 for four on the first day of the first Test against South Africa. Page 48

Motor racing: Four days after the end of the old season a large crowd watched Michael Schumacher drive his first lap for his new team, Ferrari. Page 44

Tennis: Thomas Enqvist, 21, the youngest competitor at the ATP finals in Frankfurt, qualified for the semi-finals with a victory over Michael Chang. Page 44

Rugby union: England, who meet South Africa at Twickenham tomorrow, are hoping to arrange an away fixture with them later this season. Page 48

ARTS

Nazi echoes: The British rock group Towering Inferno has started Vienna with an anti-fascist show that included swastikas and images of Nazi rallies. Page 36

Downbeat Springsteen: New pop albums reviewed today include Bruce Springsteen's downbeat portraits of blue-collar America, and Whitney Houston's collaboration with some of her great soul forefathers. Page 36

Stiff upper lip: The image of the British screen hero has changed surprisingly little in the decades since Ronald Colman and Basil Rathbone. Page 38

Violence: The Cinderella instrument of the orchestra, the viola, is being given a festival of its own at the Wigmore Hall. Page 39

FEATURES

Valerie Grove: John Birt has much to be thankful for as he heads for New York with the Princess of Wales interview in his pocket to sell to the highest bidder. Page 18

Sex and shopping: Julia Llewellyn Smith finds out how feminist writer Cynthia Heimel has changed her mind about life, love and pretty clothes since the Eighties "devil decade". Page 19

EDUCATION

Exam fever: From next September, schools will offer students a range of half-size GCSE courses which can be taken over one or two years. Page 41

THE PAPERS

There's a way to get the deficit down without doing enormous social harm. You spread the burden as widely as possible. Among much else, that means including the broad and, in some respects inflated middle-class entitlements in the cuts. — *Washington Post*

Mr Clinton wants to give the elderly the spurious impression that the current budget standoff is imperiling their benefits. It isn't, and he knows it. — *Washington Times*

The existing entitlement programs and taxes will remain in place until Congress passes a bill that the President signs. If the Republicans insist on extreme measures, Mr Clinton should veto that bill. — *New York Times*

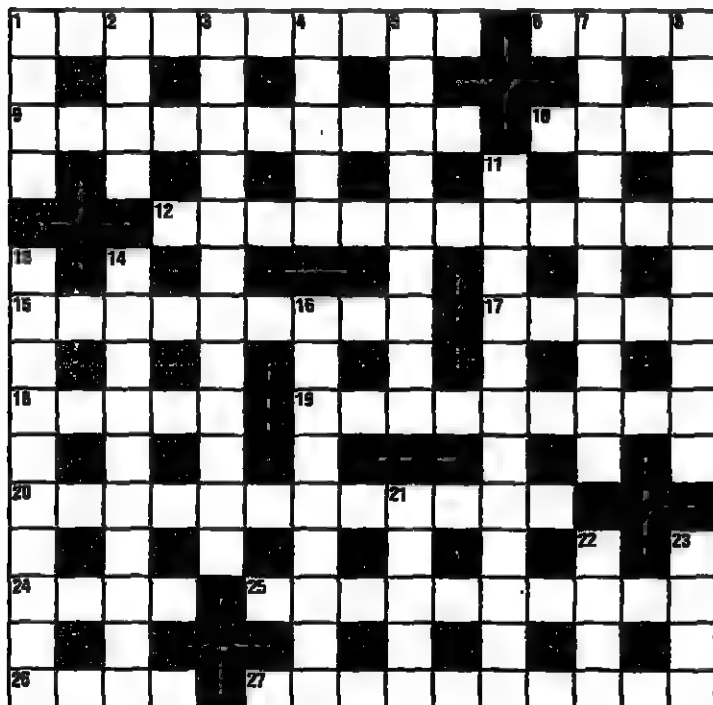
TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

FREE BOOKS
Start collecting tokens for ten free audio books and 20 more at half-price

REVIEWS
John Diamond on Douglas Coupland's *Microserfs*; Marcel Berlins's crime round-up

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,015



- ACROSS**
- Novel setting in Devon (8,2).
 - Buried in sacred piece of ground (4).
 - Exaggerated amusing experience in the briny (5,1,4).
 - Frank is unattached (4).
 - Game put into service aboard ship more than once (6-6).
 - Educationalists forego a fuss — bravo! (9).
 - Merry-making cut back hard (5).
 - Climber needs a spike put back (5).
 - Can open vessel (9).
 - Sick herdsman, poorly, got out of work (12).
 - Evasive types and contemplative characters, according to Arry (4).
 - Glad rags ruined — use stand-by (6,4).
- DOWN**
- The old way is sensible (4).
 - Incompletely lower boat (4).
 - Showing cordiality and warmth is unusual when public's admitted (4,4,4).
 - Administrators sport down under (5).
 - Fine, big, handsome fish (5-4).
 - Openers in teams representing Irish city (10).
 - Lady goes on railway — we must carry her all along the line (10).
 - It may preserve or spoil her fame, oddly (12).
 - Payout's held round about a penny? On the contrary, it's growing (10).
 - Squadron provides training for pilots, initially, in flight (10).
 - Sheltered accommodation so shameful, fellow's left distraught (9).
 - Dig up, for instance, a demand for payment (5).
 - Goddess given hard time (4).
 - Trouble with lid, opening suitcase that you examine (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,014

MARITIME AFFIRM
A E E I U M O
I M P O S E D S N I P E D
N E T R E G E E
L L A M D I S T I L L E R
V L M P T L A
S C N E A A D E
P Y O T E C H N I C S
A C O T G T P S
C O M M O D O R E I D E A L
E W A R M G A S S A
B R E A S T P E N I T E N T
A L L N A T E
R E L I S H S T A N D A R D

Times Two Crossword, page 48

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0991 500 followed by the appropriate code

Greater London	701
Kent/Surrey/Sussex	702
Dorset/Hants & IOW	703
Devon & Cornwall	704
Wilt, Dorset, Avon/Somerset	705
Berk, Bucks, Oxon	706
Bedfordshire & Essex	707
Northants/Suffolk/Essex	708
West Midlands	709
Shropshire/Hereford & Worcester	710
Central Midlands	711
East Midlands	712
Lincoln & Humberside	713
Yorkshire & Fries	714
Derbyshire & Cheshire	715
NW England	716
W & S (York & Dale)	717
NE England	718
Cumbria & Lake District	719
W Scotland	720
SE Scotland	721
SE Ireland	722
SE Central Scotland	723
SE Central Scotland	724
SE Central Scotland	725
SE Central Scotland	726
SE Central Scotland	727
SE Central Scotland	728
SE Central Scotland	729
SE Central Scotland	730

Weathercall is charged at 39p per minute (cheapest rate) and 49p per minute at all other times

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic/roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code

London & SE traffic, roadworks	731
East of London	732
East of London	733
East of London	734
East of London	735
East of London	736
East of London	737
East of London	738
East of London	739
East of London	740
East of London	741
East of London	742
East of London	743
East of London	744
East of London	745
East of London	746
East of London	747
East of London	748
East of London	749
East of London	750

AA Roadwatch is charged at 39p per minute (cheapest rate) and 49p per minute at all other times

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest day temp: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 14C (57F). Lowest day temp: Loch Glacmor, Highland, 01C (34F). Highest rainfall: Newcastle upon Tyne 2.4mm. Highest sunshine: Glasgow, 7 hrs

FORECAST

General: A cold northerly airflow covering the country will bring wintry showers into the north and east. A chilly feel to the day is expected across England and Wales, especially in areas exposed to the brisk northerly breeze. Eastern counties of England will see showers throughout the day, with wintry at times, and the odd shower is also possible on exposed western coasts. Elsewhere will remain dry with sunny spells.

Northern Ireland and much of western Scotland will have a mostly dry day, if rather chilly in the wind. Eastern and northern Scotland will again be pestered by frequent wintry showers, falling as snow over the Grampians.

London, SE England, Central S England, E Midlands, W Midlands, Channel Isles, SW England, S Wales: mostly dry with clear or sunny spells. Wind mainly north to northwest.

moderate. Maximum temp 8C (46F).

E Anglia, E England, NE England, Borders: clear or sunny intervals with wintry showers. Wind northerly fresh. Max 5C (45F).

N Wales, NW England, Lake District: clear or sunny intervals, with wintry showers on exposed coasts. Wind mainly north to northwest moderate to fresh. Max 7C (45F).

Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, NW Scotland, Orkney: frequent wintry showers. Wind northerly fresh. Max 5C (41F).

SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll: mostly dry with clear or sunny intervals. Wind north to northeast moderate to fresh. Max 7C (45F).

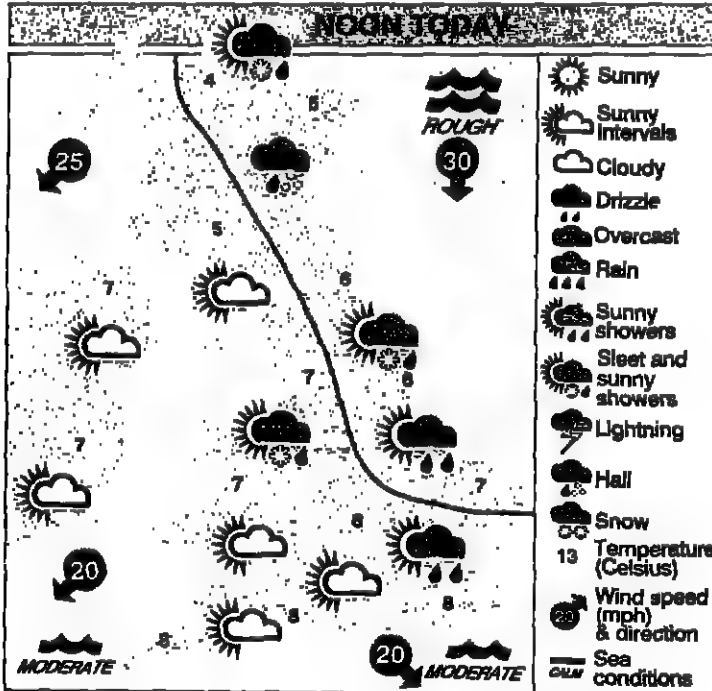
Outlook: showers tomorrow in the north and east, but mostly dry on Sunday.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

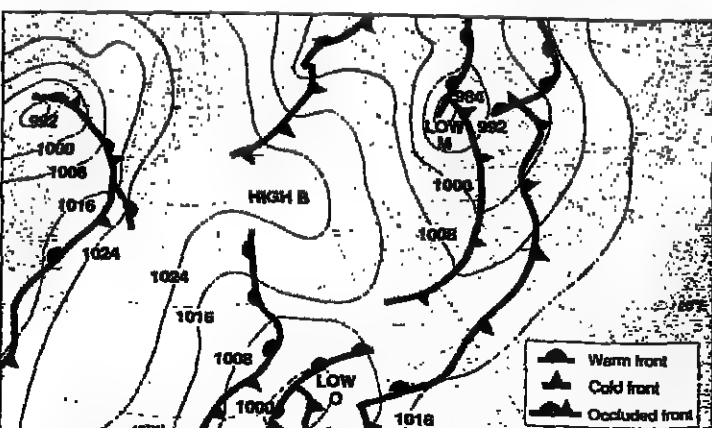
City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Humidity	Pressure
Aberdeen	15	10	10	85	1015
Cardiff	12	10	10	85	1015
Edinburgh	10	10	10	85	1015
Glasgow	10	10	10	85	1015
London	12	10	10	85	1015
Manchester	10	10	10	85	1015
Newcastle	10	10	10	85	1015
Nottingham	10	10	10	85	1015
Sheffield	10	10	10	85	1015
Sunderland	10	10	10	85	1015
Swansea	10	10	10	85	1015
Torquay	10	10	10	85	1015
Weymouth	10	10	10	85	1015
Wolverhampton	10	10	10	85	1015
Wrexham	10	10	10	85	1015

ABROAD

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Humidity	Pressure
Alexandria	25	10	10	85	1015
Amman	20	10	10	85	1015
Baghdad	25	10	10	85	1015
Bangkok	28	10	10	85	1015
Beirut	20	10	10	85	1015
Bombay	28	10	10	85	1015
Buenos Aires	20	10	10	85	1015
Calcutta	28	10	10	85	1015
Cairo	25	10	10	85	1015
Colon	28	10	10	85	1015
Hong Kong	28	10	10	85	1015
Jaipur	28	10	10	85	1015
Jakarta	28	10	10	85	1015
Kuala Lumpur	28	10	10	85	1015
London	12	10	10	85	1015
Los Angeles	20	10	10	85	1015
Madrid	15	10	10	85	1015
Mumbai	28	10	10	85	1015
New York	15	10	10	85	1015
Paris	10	10	10	85	1015
Rangoon	28	10	10	85	1015
San Francisco	15	10	10	85	1015
Singapore	28	10	10	85	1015
Tokyo	15	10	10	85	1015
Winnipeg	10	10	10	85	1015
Zurich	10	10	10	85	1015



Changes to the chart below from noon: low M will move east and fill; low O will sit in mid-Atlantic and drift north; high B will build across British Isles and intensify



HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	PM	HT	TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	7:48	5:22	5:45	Leith	9:27	4:56	10:04	4:08
London Bridge	8:50	6:24	6:51	Liverpool	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	9:52	7:26	7:53	Lowestoft	3:49	4:26	5:33	2:22
London Bridge	10:54	8:28	8:56	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	11:56	9:30	9:57	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	12:58	10:32	11:00	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	1:00	11:34	11:57	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	2:02	12:36	12:59	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	3:04	1:38	1:41	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	4:06	2:40	2:43	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	5:08	3:42	3:45	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	6:10	4:44	4:47	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	7:12	5:46	5:49	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	8:14	6:48	6:51	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	9:16	7:50	7:53	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	10:18	8:52	8:55	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	11:20	9:54	9:57	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	12:22	10:56	10:59	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	1:24	11:58	12:01	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	2:26	1:00	1:03	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	3:28	2:02	2:05	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	4:30	3:04	3:07	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	5:32	4:06	4:09	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	6:34	5:08	5:11	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	7:36	6:10	6:13	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	8:38	7:12	7:15	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	9:40	8:14	8:17	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	10:42	9:16	9:19	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	11:44	10:18	10:21	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	12:46	11:20	11:23	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	1:48	12:22	12:25	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	2:50	1:24	1:27	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	3:52	2:26	2:29	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
London Bridge	4:54	3:28	3:31	London	6:06	7:26	6:33	2:22
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The format of GCSEs is under review



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Flying Scotsman in pursuit of world rally title

TELEVISION AND RADIO
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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 17 1995

Inflation fall cheers City

Shares jump to record on rate cut hopes

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

THE London stock market soared to a record high yesterday as investors bet on lower interest rates as well as a tax-cutting Budget after news of a drop in inflation and a net repayment of public borrowing in October.

The euphoria, already bubbling under the surface after Wall Street's new high on Wednesday, became full-blooded after the figures. The City now believes that Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, will push for an interest rate cut as soon as the dust has settled on his Budget.

A combination of lower mortgage rates and intense competition in the insurance industry helped headline inflation to its biggest fall in any October since 1944.

The all-items retail prices index fell 0.5 per cent, pushing the annual rate down to 3.2 per cent from 3.9 per cent in September, according to the Central Statistical Office. The City had expected a decline to about 3.7 per cent.

Underlying inflation also fell from 3.1 per cent to 2.9 per cent, against City predictions of a small rise. The 0.3 per cent decline in the month was the biggest for any October since records began in 1975. RPIX, the measure favoured by the Bank of England, which excludes both mortgage interest payments and indirect taxes, fell to 2.4 per cent from 2.6 per cent.

Separate figures showed that the Government made a net repayment of public borrowing in October of £1.3 billion. Again, this was much

better than forecast. The markets had been expecting a small £400 public sector borrowing requirement.

The reassuringly good performance in October was down to a surge in corporation tax receipts, which reflected rapid economic growth last year. October is the first major month for corporation tax payments and the Treasury had been pinning hopes on a good haul to bring the path of the PSBR a bit closer to its forecasts.

Even after October's figure, City economists are still looking for the PSBR to overshoot the Treasury's forecast of £23.5 billion by a minimum of £4 billion. But October's net repayment at least allows the

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Chancellor to point to an improvement against last year.

The cumulative PSBR in the first seven months of the financial year was £18.8 billion, compared with £19.6 billion in 1994-95. This is still a disappointing forecast, but the City now appears ready to accept generous tax cuts, as long as these are mostly offset by cuts in public spending.

Andrew Milligan, of New Japan Securities, said: "This paves the way for tax cuts in the Budget just as the good RPI numbers open the door for a spring interest rate cut." Ian Shepherdson, of HSBC Markets, said: "Any objec-

tions to lower rates in the wake of a responsible Budget must now be fading. The Chancellor will be champing at the bit."

Royal Bank of Scotland yesterday announced that it was cutting the rates on a range of fixed-rate mortgages by up to 1.2 percentage points. The Halifax Building Society said that it had no plans to change rates, but the Royal Bank move signals continuing efforts by lenders to revive the housing market. A base rate cut would make such moves even more likely.

Sterling continued to languish near record lows, but British assets, including gilts, which rallied by nearly a full percentage point, sparked. This was not just on domestic economic news. Shares were powered by a record-breaking performance on Wall Street and gilts by expectations of interest rate cuts around the world.

The Bank of France rewarded the French Government's strong package of welfare cuts and tax increases by cutting its key intervention rate by 0.2 per cent from 5 per cent. It was the first time it had moved its intervention rate since July 28, 1994. The Bank also cut its five to ten-day lending rate from 6.35 to 6.10 per cent.

The Dutch central bank also cut rates a little. This week, the Bundesbank and the US Federal Reserve both left rates unchanged, but both are expected to ease monetary policy in the weeks ahead.

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Sir John Nott will be speaking to the actuaries about the assumptions underlying the deal

L&G to pay out £160m bonus to policyholders

By Anne Ashworth

THE 1.4 million Legal & General with-profits policyholders are to share a £160 million special bonus, to be paid from the surplus on the long-term fund. The 38,860 shareholders will benefit to the tune of £115 million, as L&G moves to increase what they earn from the life fund.

Longstanding policyholders stand to gain most from the special bonus which will add at least an extra 30 per cent to the 1995 annual reversionary bonus to be declared in the spring of 1996. David Prosser, L&G chief executive, calculated that anyone with a 25-year £30-a-month policy, maturing in December, could expect to receive an extra £900 or so.

Shareholders will not know what their reward will be until L&G's 1995 results are announced in March 1996. Anthony Holson, L&G finance director, would not specify how much of the £115 million would be distributed to shareholders, or retained for investment in new ventures.

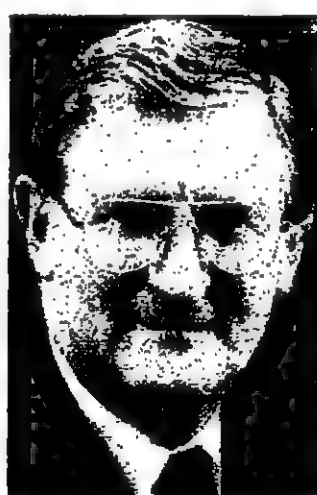
Mr Prosser, however, promised that the dividend would be "better than inflation, or better than the market". The 21p rise to 666p in L&G shares indicated that investors are anticipating a generous divi-

dend. The news that policyholders are to receive a sweetener came as something of a surprise yesterday. When L&G began talks in March with the Department of Trade and Industry on the operation of the fund and the position of shareholders, it was thought that only shareholders would gain. It was announced yesterday that the DTI has now given its approval to the proposals, as has Michael Arnold, of consulting actuaries Hymans Robertson who was appointed as independent actuary to protect the interests of policyholders.

Among the policyholders who expressed concern at the company's plans in March was Sir John Nott, chairman of Hillside Holdings, who was anxious that policyholders would not be disadvantaged.

He said yesterday: "I have received the documents and will be studying them. I also hope to speak tomorrow to the independent actuary so that I can better understand the assumptions underlying the deal both for policyholders and for shareholders."

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Prosser: dividend promise

Lloyd's launches damage exercise

By Jon Ashworth

LLOYD'S yesterday moved swiftly to counter the damage done by Peter Middleton's abrupt departure as chief executive as details of behind-the-scenes panic caused by his sudden resignation began to surface. Mr Middleton's replacement, Ron Sandler, 43, was formally voted in at a hastily convened council meeting yesterday morning, and immediately embarked on a round of meetings aimed at reassuring the market.

Mr Sandler, brought in eight months ago to co-ordinate Lloyd's reconstruction and renewal (R&R) plan, insisted that the £2.8 billion settlement offer to names was not at risk. Mr Middleton, he said, had simply been made an offer he could not refuse by Salomon Brothers, the US investment bank, which he is to join in January as head of European operations. Salomon would not comment on rumours that it offered Mr Middleton \$1 million a year.

Mr Middleton gave his resignation to David Rowland, chairman of Lloyd's, last Friday, forcing him to cancel a speaking engagement in Texas to attend to the crisis. Mr Middleton went in his place. Lloyd's council tentatively approved Mr Sandler as successor at a meeting on Sunday.

Mr Sandler said: "Peter's resignation, while regrettable, clearly needs to be seen for what it is. There is not a conspiracy. There is not a rift between David and Peter. The R&R is not off-track." R&R was "a vast patchwork of interconnected projects" that did not depend on one person.

Market players gave cautious backing to Mr Sandler. Michael Deeny, chairman of the Goodie Walker names' action group, said: "We don't care whose name is at the bottom of the cheque, as long as it's a big enough cheque."

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	
FT-SE 100	5610.8 (+38.4)
Yield	3.96%
FT-SE All share	1769.35 (+17.88)
Nikkei	17936.52 (+258.78)
Dow Jones	6864.30 (+41.55)*
S&P Composite	597.55 (+3.58)*
US RATE	
Federal Funds	5 1/4% (5 1/4%)
Long Bond	108 1/8% (107 1/4%)
Yield	8.22% (8.23%)
LONDON MONEY	
3-mth Interbank	6 1/4% (6 1/4%)
12m long gilts	108 1/8% (107 1/4%)
STERLING	
New York	1.5982* (1.5905)
London	
DM	1.5375 (1.5385)
¥	2.1947 (2.1877)
FF	7.5800 (7.5540)
SP	1.7758 (1.7700)
Yen	169.18 (167.29)
£ Index	82.7 (82.6)
US \$ DOLLAR	
London	
DM	1.6087* (1.6080)
FF	4.8635* (4.8555)
SP	1.1412* (1.1385)
Yen	108.10* (101.52)
£ Index	82.7 (82.6)
Tokyo close Yen 101.78	
NORTH SEA OIL	
Brent 15-day (Jan)	\$16.30 (\$16.45)
GOLD	
London close	\$388.15 (\$388.05)
* denotes midday trading price	

Walking out

Hundreds of Ford car workers walked out of the Dagenham plant in Essex yesterday as they held their own protest over a fight for a bigger pay increase than the 4.75 per cent on offer. Union leaders are due to meet shop stewards next week. Page 30

Tuning in

Capital Radio, Britain's largest commercial radio group, says it is looking to expand further. The group has plans to bid for new UK licences when they become available next year. Capital Radio profits rose by 42 per cent to £26.5 million before tax in the year to the end of September. Tempus 28, Report 32

M&S looks at future without St Michael

MARKS & SPENCER is conducting a full review of its use of the company name, M&S logos and the St Michael brand name (Robin Young writes).

Roger Scott, formerly in charge of promotional design, is overseeing the project and has until June to report back on all aspects of the company's in-store communications.

A spokeswoman said: "Everything is under review, so we cannot guarantee that the St Michael brand name or any existing logos will be kept. What we are saying is that it is far too early to say that they will be abandoned. It is too early to say what the conclusions will be."

The St Michael name, though still used on millions of labels and packaging, has had diminishing importance in M&S stores in recent years, while the company name has been given increasing importance. The St Michael name, first used in the 1920s, was taken from one of the chain's founders, Michael Marks, and was designed to give "own brand" merchandise greater appeal.

It has been cherished by members of the founder's family, but reduced family influence and a new generation of senior management is thought to have cleared the way for a possible change.

The expansion of business abroad has shown M&S that its company name is more widely recognised than its brand name.

Standard & Poor's cuts British Gas rating

By Christine Buckley

BRITISH GAS will have to pay more for its funds after Standard & Poor's, the credit-rating group, cut its long-term rating on the utility from AA+ to AA- and declared its outlook negative.

Just a day after British Gas appealed for government cash to shore up financial damage caused by its exposure to take-or-pay contracts with suppliers, Standard & Poor's said its action reflected growing competitive and regulatory pressures on British Gas.

Specifically, the ratings agency said the credit of British Gas was poorer because of its large portfolio of long-term gas purchase contracts, lower gas prices, its declining market share and uncertainty over

regulatory reviews of its supply and transport.

The agency said: "If British Gas is not successful at restructuring its contract portfolio before 1998, Standard & Poor's expects British Gas's financial position to deteriorate."

It added that the company needed to complete a corporate overhaul including renewal of board-level managers and staff rationalisation.

Standard & Poor's credit ratings are widely used by banks and other fund providers and the downgrading is another dent to the image of British Gas, which recently pulled out of the Charter Mark scheme for public service standards.

Airbus stands to lose if Boeing and McDonnell link

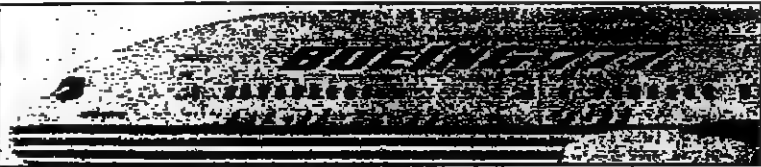
Aircraft giants in merger talks

By Richard Thomson and Colin Nabbrough

BOEING and McDonnell Douglas are in talks over a merger that would create the world's largest aerospace company and threaten to steamroller the competition on both sides of the Atlantic.

The deal would be worth about \$10 billion and form a company with sales of \$35 billion. It would take the consolidation in the US defence and aerospace industry a huge step forward. The new group would easily outstrip the \$23 billion sales of Lockheed Martin, the massive aerospace and defence group created in March by the merger of Lockheed and Martin Marietta.

Although Boeing is said to



A deal would take consolidation of the US defence industry a huge step forward

be urging a merger, the two groups are also thought to be discussing the possibility of an asset swap. Neither company would comment on whether talks are in progress.

"It would be a hugely significant deal, but it may never happen," said a Wall Street analyst. "Boeing has never been keen on mergers in the past, but the commercial logic of this may be too compelling." The US Defence Department has encouraged

consolidation among military suppliers, but few had envisaged the possibility of an alliance as large as Boeing and McDonnell Douglas.

"From an antitrust point of view, I doubt it would happen," said Bill Whitlow, analyst at Pacific Crest Securities. "The company's market share in commercial aircraft would be so high. There would be one US supplier, and worldwide market share he more than 70 per cent."

For European aircraft makers, a Boeing-McDonnell link-up would probably intensify the already fierce transatlantic competition on cost, probably making life more difficult for the Airbus consortium that includes British Aerospace.

In addition, it would also increase the pressure on Europe's military aircraft industry and further complicate governments' decisions about new aircraft.

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TRADE INDENTIFY

Bank faces court test over BCCI

By PATRICIA TEHAN
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE Bank of England will face its first test in the High Court on Monday as liquidators of the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International attempt to sue the Bank for damages for failing to regulate BCCI properly.

Mr Justice Clarke is to be asked to decide on various questions of law, related to whether or not the claim against it is legally valid.

The liquidators, from Touche Ross, the accountant, started their action against the Bank in May 1993 when they lodged a statement of claim for damages on behalf of creditors. They are now acting for 6,000 former depositors. If allowed to proceed with the action against the Bank, their claim could run into billions of pounds.

Meanwhile, the first payment to creditors of the bank could be made in the first half of next year after former employees opposing a \$1.8 billion settlement plan dropped their objections in Luxembourg.

Single currency report masks battle of wills

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE cautious, seemingly uncontroversial proposal for a European currency published this week by the European Monetary Institute (EMI) was the result of significant internal disagreements, notably between France and the rest, it has since emerged.

The final report, presented by Alexandre Lamfalussy, who heads the forerunner of a European Central Bank, was an outright victory for gradualists, led by Germany and campaigned for strongly by the Bank of England, and a defeat for France.

France wanted to force the pace of introduction of the new European currency. It argued for an element of compulsion to force the private sector to switch to the new currency on a tighter timetable than thought practicable by others.

One monetary source said the French approach reflected fears that the European currency will not happen, or could be reversed, unless the issue is



Alexandre Lamfalussy presented the cautious report

forced. Other central banks argued that this was nonsense and only a pragmatic view, with each step of the process implemented sensibly, could be a proper precondition of a single currency.

The Germans believe that it is better to delay introduction of the new currency than to rush it. The Bundesbank has made clear that the currency should be at least as strong a monetary anchor for Europe

as the mark and is not acceptable otherwise.

In its final form, the EMI suggested a three-year transition after monetary union before the new European currencies stop being legal tender. The most likely date for the latter, on current timetables, is July 1, 2002.

The EMI report said private economic agents should be free to use the new currency during the three-year transition phase envisaged, but not compelled to do so. The British and Germans expressed satisfaction that this realism had squashed French objections.

There were two main areas of disagreement between France and the rest, which one European monetary source said had led to the EMI being blander than intended, with the omission of much material that had been discussed.

First, the Bank of France is thought to have argued that central banks should not be required to provide conversion facilities to translate amounts between the new European currency and national ones. The logic of its position appeared to be designed to force the private sector to develop its own mechanisms sooner.

The second area of disagreement was the French insistence on a quicker transfer by governments of their public sector accounting to the new currency than other central banks deemed practical.

Jobs to go as US bank closes centre

By OUR BANKING
CORRESPONDENT

CHEMICAL BANK, the US bank that is merging with Chase Manhattan next year, is to close its Cardiff processing centre in the new year, with the loss of 276 jobs.

This is the first wave of job losses among the combined 4,000 UK staff of the two banks. When the merger was announced in August, the banks estimated that 16 per cent of jobs worldwide (640 in the UK) would go. The merger is due to be completed by the end of March.

Chemical set up the derivatives, custody and foreign exchange processing centre in Cardiff 13 years ago. It confirmed yesterday that the site would close, but a spokesman said: "We want to redeploy as many people as we can to the Chase processing centre in Bournemouth and to London."

The jobs will be lost over the next few months. Chemical said the decision had nothing to do with the quality of staff.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Shell and BP suffer EU anti-cartel raids

SHELL, already under heavy fire for its role in Nigeria, and BP, are among a group of 20 petrochemicals companies raided by European Commission investigators looking into a possible illegal cartel. The Commission revealed yesterday that sites had been raided in nine member states, including Britain, at the start of a probe into possible "restrictive practices" by polyethylene and polypropylene producers. The action, which was prompted by complaints from the plastics industry, is the latest manifestation of the tough stance taken by Karel Van Miert, the European Competition Commissioner, over cartels.

Steel and carton products and cement were all the target of Commission probes last year and fines imposed by Brussels exceeded £400 million. Commission officials yesterday declined to name the petrochemicals companies under investigation, but companies such as Shell, BP, and Germany's Hoechst, BASF and Veba, admitted that they had had their premises raided. Fines imposed in 1989 for price-fixing on polypropylene were overturned by the European Court of First Instance in April this year.

Lasmo plans disposal

LASMO, the debt-laden international oil group, yesterday announced plans to sell its Nova Scotia subsidiary to PanCanadian Petroleum for \$360 million (£28 million). The deal is subject to further due diligence by the buyer, although it is hoped that it will be reflected in Lasmo's 1996 accounts. Lasmo Nova Scotia produces oil from the Cohasset and Panuke fields off Nova Scotia. It is also drilling a development well on the adjacent Balmoral satellite field that should be completed by the end of 1995. Lasmo shares remained unchanged at 155p yesterday.

Progress at Barratt

BARRATT DEVELOPMENTS, the housebuilder, forecast "comfortably higher" house sales this year after recording a 7 per cent rise year-on-year in sales reservation revenue since July 1. Sir Lawrie Barratt, chairman, told the annual meeting there had been progress in spite of the housing market deterioration evident throughout the year. He called on the Government to act immediately to restore confidence in the market after two years of ill-conceived measures. First-time buyers and those caught in the negative equity trap should be helped, he said.

Lyles goes into a spin

S. LYLES, the yarn spinner and dyer based in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, has announced a pre-tax loss of £578,000, for the year ended June 30, compared with a profit of £566,000 last time, after a fall in volume sales of 11 per cent. The company said that the market for consumer goods had been depressed. Operating losses totalled £38,000, compared with a profit of £673,000 last time. The loss per share was 4.08p, compared with earnings of 10.37p last time. There will be no paid dividend, compared with 3.5p per share last year.

Southnews at £1.97m

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

SOUTHNEWS, the publisher of paid-for and free newspapers in London and the Home Counties, reported pre-tax profits up 40 per cent to £1.97 million, against £1.41 million in the six months to September 30.

Earnings per share rose to 8.48p, against 6.14p last time, and the interim dividend has been increased to 1.70p net per share (1.35p net), a rise of 30 per cent.

The company also announced the acquisition of the newspaper titles and business of the Croydon Advertiser Group for £12.95 million cash.

TOURIST RATES

	Sept	Oct
Australia \$	2.22	2.06
Austria Sch	16.47	14.97
Belgium Fr	48.16	43.88
Canada \$	2.22	2.06
Cyprus Cyp£	0.741	0.686
Denmark Kr	8.13	7.53
Finland Mkk	7.14	6.48
France Fr	7.98	7.29
Germany DM	2.36	2.14
Greece Dr	379.43	354.43
Hong Kong \$	12.70	11.70
Ireland P	1.02	0.94
Israel Shk	8.1000	4.4500
Italy Lire	2593.00	2491.00
Japan Yen	173.02	167.02
Malta	0.588	0.538
Netherlands Gld	2.615	2.385
New Zealand \$	2.35	2.25
Norway Kr	10.28	9.48
Portugal Esc	241.50	223.00
S Africa R	16	15.25
Spain Ptas	166.00	163.00
Sweden Kr	10.98	10.15
Switzerland Fr	1.91	1.75
Turkey Lira	166.00	77757.0
USA \$	1.567	1.527

Rates for small notes as supplied by Barclay Bank. Other rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates at close of trading yesterday.

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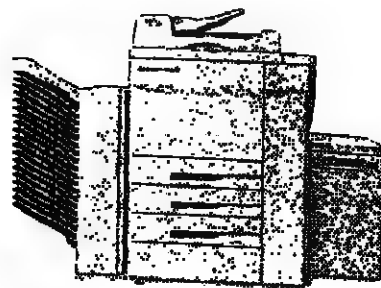
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□ Ringing the changes at Lloyd's □ PowerGen's oh-so-clever deal □ Ken cleared for Budget boost

Exit the galloping monk

THE more one ponders Peter Middleton's abrupt exit from the crisis-ridden ironmongery of Lloyd's, the more one wonders what was the tearing rush.

The man who will probably never shake off the label of former monk does not take holy orders with Salomon Brothers until January 1, so why bale out when negotiations over the much-vaunted £2.8 billion settlement package are at such a critical stage?

It is rather as if an open heart surgeon had suddenly torn off his facemask and raced for the door, leaving his hapless patient twitching on the operating table. He could at least have finished the tricky bits, even if someone else had to put in the stitches.

Insiders were putting on the inevitable brave public face yesterday, but privately they admit to being baffled. Mr Middleton's relationship with David Rowland was always a difficult one, but it had not yet broken down irretrievably.

He was approached five weeks ago by headhunters hired by Salomon to find a new chief for its European operations, and informed Mr Rowland of his intention to resign last week, forcing the Lloyd's chairman to cancel a trip to America.

Lloyd's had planned to announce Mr Middleton's departure in an orderly fashion at a press conference yesterday, but was obliged to rush out the news on Wednesday evening after it began to leak. Hardly the calm, reassuring image that Lloyd's would so desperately like to portray, but when is there ever calm on Line Street?

True, it is often better to clear your desk than hang around and cause embarrassment to all, and it certainly matches the Salomon style, because Americans don't like to be kept waiting.

But everything in the Lloyd's machinery is geared towards a fresh start next spring — hardly an eternity away. Mr Middleton has invested countless hours winning the confidence of the litigating names, and he could surely have hung on for his Christmas hamper before heading for the door.

He has every confidence in Ron Sandler, and it is not in his interest to get in his successors' way. Negotiations with names in

the run-up to spring will be difficult, and Mr Sandler has already taken a large part in them. The truth is, the strain of running Lloyd's has begun to tell on even the super-fit Mr Middleton, and a long holiday is a must. If Salomon wants him properly installed by the new year and doing the rounds of the festive season before that, this timetable would require an immediate departure.

Lloyd's has seen some pretty run events in its 300-plus years, but the saga of the galloping monk must rank as one of the most curious. The Lutine Bell will ring and ring on this one.

Alternating currents

IT'S not exactly what divorce lawyers would call a clean break. Instead PowerGen has been very clever in putting together a heads-it-wins, tails-it-wins deal for the power plant sale forced by the regulator.

PENNINGTON



The trouble is, now is not a very good time for PowerGen to appear too clever. The board are biting their nails down to the quick waiting for next week's ruling on the Midlands Electricity takeover from Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade. Being seen to have put one over on the regulator is not in their best interests.

The reckoning, when the Midlands deal was announced two months ago, was that it would be referred. A lot of electricity has flowed through the Grid since then. The climate of opinion then swung in favour of PowerGen's bid, along with National Power's

offer for Southern, being cleared. But opinions are fickle beasts, and it has swung back again. The odds are about fifty-fifty, if anything slightly favouring a clearance.

When Professor Littlechild ruled in February 1994 on both generators making plant sales within two years, the word he used was "disposal". By this July, with little sign of progress and the luckless regulator rather preoccupied with other things, he had been backed into countenancing some sort of lease and earn-out.

The company has now pushed this as far as it can. Note, in passing, that National Power has indeed opted for a straight sale, by auction. PowerGen will receive less than half the £450 million proceeds of sale as a lump sum. The rest, probably about £250 million but quite possibly far more or far less, will depend on future output.

If output, and so earn-out payments, are low, PowerGen gains because its remaining

plant picks up a higher market share. The higher the output, the bigger the payments. Clever. Perhaps too clever.

When bad news is not all bad

KENNETH CLARKE has never been known for looking down-in-the-mouth, but he must be positively cock-a-hoop now. Lousy retail sales are bad news for retailers and a stagnant jobs market is horrible for all of us. But economic slowdown is exactly the justification the Chancellor needs to give his own backbenchers what they want.

The last hurdles to a feel-good Budget were removed yesterday with excellent inflation figures and an unexpected net repayment of government borrowing. The Public Sector Borrowing Requirement is still bound to overshoot the Treasury's over-optimistic projections, but probably not by the alarming amount feared by the City.

This mildly positive shock less than a fortnight before B-Day means that even a Chancellor of necessity on election alert will be given some benefit of the doubt. An instinctively pro-Conservative City was looking for an excuse to let him get away with it and they now have it.

The inflation figures are even better news, and the Chancellor will now be itching to cut rates, although he must be seen to avoid an appearance of indecent haste after the Budget. Even the bigger tax cuts now being touted in the City will be a drop in the ocean compared with the tax squeeze since 1992. A cut in interest rates is the single policy move which will breathe genuine new life into a sagging economy.

Muddled waters

THE latest survey of public beaches is a fine example of the British Rail school of statistical analysis. BR ran itself into the buffers some years ago with a campaign claiming some, in the event a spurious percentage, of trains arrived on time, precious little comfort to those waiting for all the others. Now the Government is much cheered by news that, on nine British beaches in ten, the sea will not poison you.

Young says C&W successor will be an outsider

By ERIC REGULY

LORD Young of Grafton, the executive chairman of Cable and Wireless, who announced yesterday that he will resign in early 1997, said that his successor "definitely" will be recruited from outside the company. His comments were seen by some as a blow to James Ross, the deputy chairman and chief executive.

Sources said they would not be surprised if Mr Ross, 57, left the company within the next year now that he is not being considered for the chairman's post. Mr Ross, how-

ever, made it known yesterday that he never considered himself a candidate for the job.

Lord Young will step down on February 27, 1997, his 65th birthday. He denied recent speculation that he has been under pressure from C&W's non-executive directors to go earlier. "This is my suggestion to them," he said. "This comes at a time when you've got to slow down a bit. I find myself on a long-distance flight almost every week."

Lord Young, who was Trade and Industry Secretary

from 1987 to 1989, said that his successor ideally should have both business and political experience because of the nature of C&W. The group has operations in about 50 countries and has learnt that strong political connections are essential to gain business. Lord Young said: "It's all about old friends and knowing people."

He said his main goal before retirement "is to see Mercury properly established". Mercury, 80 per cent owned by C&W, has been cutting costs since last year but still underperforms the rest of the group. In the half to September 30, Mercury reported operating profit of £103 million, up 7 per cent on the same period a year ago. Its profit margins, however, remained at 12 per cent. Its return on capital is also 12 per cent, against more than 16 per cent for the rest of C&W.

The group as a whole reported pre-tax profits, before the sale of a telecom investment in Germany, of £616 million, up 9 per cent. Operating profits rose 7 per cent, to £636 million, and turnover was up by a similar amount, to £2.71 billion. C&W said that cost-cutting and a reduction in losses in its start-up companies, including Mercury One-2-One, the third-largest mobile phone network, were behind the improved results.

Earnings per share, excluding the exceptional gain, rose to 13p, from 11.9p. Including the gain, earnings were 19.6p. The interim dividend, due on February 28, rises 9 per cent, to 3.08p. C&W shares rose 2p, to 425p.



Lord Young has aims for Mercury before his 1997 retirement

Bottomley plea on legal aid

By ROBERT MILLER

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY, the Heritage Minister, has asked the Legal Aid Board to reconsider a decision to withdraw legal aid from a pensioner who is fighting to keep her home from being repossessed by Lloyds Bank.

Mrs Bottomley, yesterday sent an urgent fax to Stephen Orchard, chief executive of the Legal Aid Board, asking him to "carefully examine the case" of Bill and Yvonne Wright of Dockenfield, near Farnham, Surrey, who are due to appear in court on Monday in a hearing for possession of their home. The

Wrights, who live in Mrs Bottomley's constituency, were informed on Wednesday that their Legal Aid certificate had been withdrawn because Mrs Wright turned 60 in June and is now in receipt of a pension and therefore no longer qualifies for help with legal fees.

The case involves a joint venture property partnership the Wrights entered into with another couple, who are Lloyds Bank customers and who allegedly gave a legal charge over the property to cover their personal debts. The Wrights bank with NatWest.

Telegraph to raise price

SHARES of the Telegraph group rose 19p to 428p on news that it will raise the cover price of *The Daily Telegraph* by 5p next week (Eric Reguly writes).

But Dan Colson, Telegraph chief executive, said the cover price increase, which will take *The Daily Telegraph* to 35p, is not likely to be enough to offset the sharp rise in newsprint costs. Newsprint prices climbed 30 per cent

in July and probably will rise again early next year.

The cover price increases came as the Telegraph group reported an operating profit of £6.1 million (£17.7 million) in the nine months to the end of September.

Turnover declined 4.2 per cent to £182.2 per cent, while earnings per share before extraordinary gains fell from 17.7p to 7.5p.

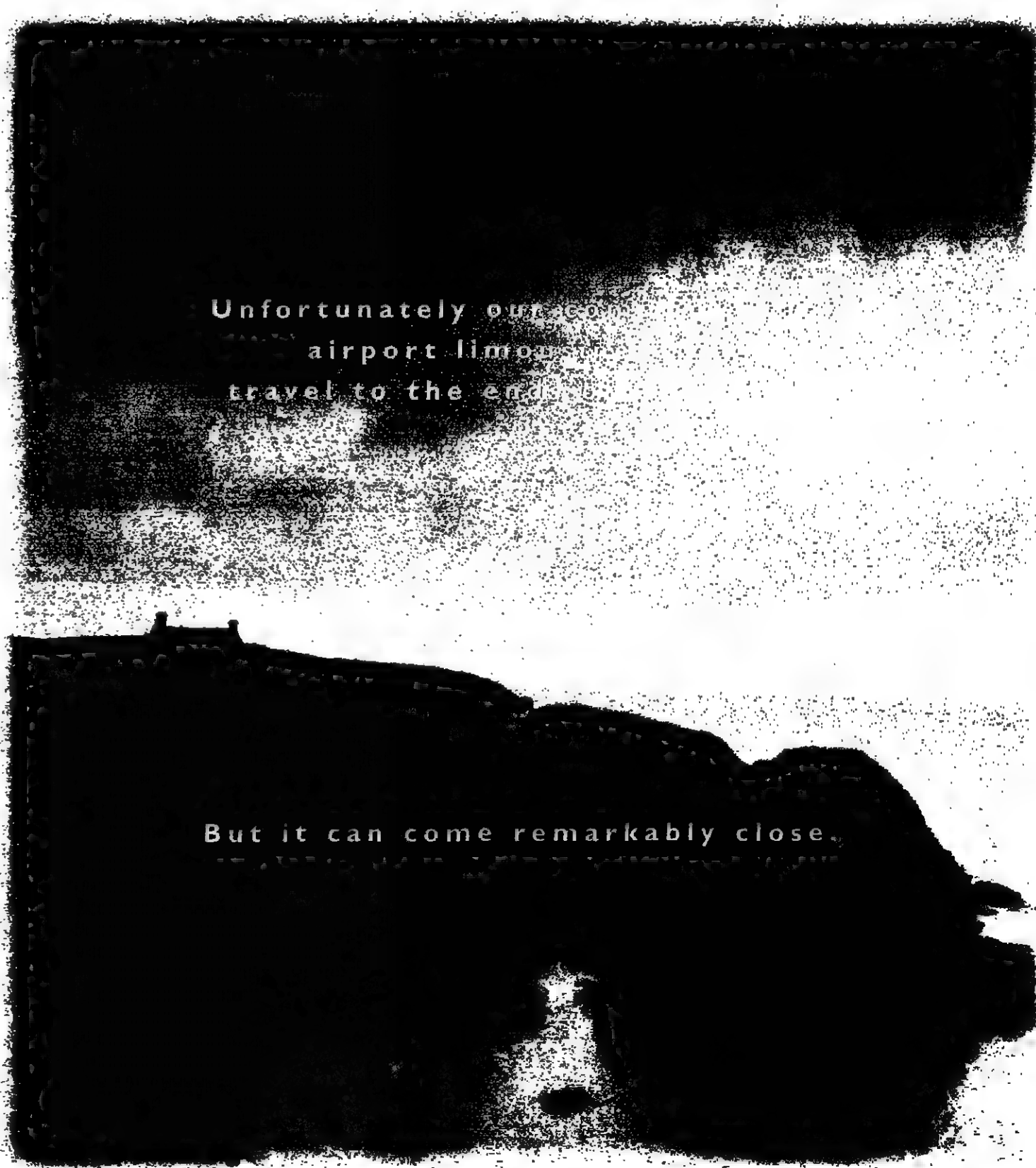
Utility merger talks open

THE boards of South Wales Electricity and Welsh Water met today in a London bank for takeover talks (Christine Buckley writes). Although both sides insist that their dealings are exploratory, the meeting will start this morning in the offices of one of the two banks that are advising Swalec — NM Rothschild and Goldman Sachs.

After the meeting, Swalec has scheduled its own board gathering in

London to discuss proposals from Welsh Water. The water utility was last week forced by the Stock Exchange to admit it was considering a takeover. Then it said that it was looking at a takeover that would value its quarry at £10.20p. However, Welsh Water will have to improve that figure, the share having climbed on anticipation that a rival bidder may step in. Swalec stood at £10.31p yesterday.

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Game's up for income tax

INCOME tax, that dreaded impost introduced "as a temporary measure" in December, 1798, is to be repealed. An "official" announcement will be made on Budget Day.

Well, that's what Claire Palmer of Waddingtons Games assures me. Tonight 62 teams drawn from the City and the world of politics gather at the Park Lane Hotel, London, to celebrate the 60th birthday of Monopoly, the world's most famous board game.

The players, who include teams from KPMG, Hasbro, Cazenove and Schroders, will be raising funds for the charity Children with Leukaemia. Little, if anything, has changed on the Monopoly board since the game was launched in 1935, and even today a "silver" top hat, boot, racing car, little dog, iron, and a ship come with every box.

But it is the punishing square "Income tax. Pay £200", which on November 28 is being repealed until the end of the year. "The gesture is in celebration of the 60th year," Claire tells me.

Mr Chancellor. Please follow suit.

Brotherly bikers

PETER MIDDLETON, who is hot-footing it from Lloyd's to Salomon Brothers, will find kindred spirits at his new place of work. Middleton, who has a passion for motor bikes and is forever joining in marathons, will certainly find a state of the art gymnasium at the Victoria headquarters. But will he find fellow bikers? "Not among the senior staff," one spokesperson sniffed. "But I have seen some of the traders on the floor in motor bike helmets and big boots," she said.



"We seem to be insured with everybody except L&G"

Ficry words

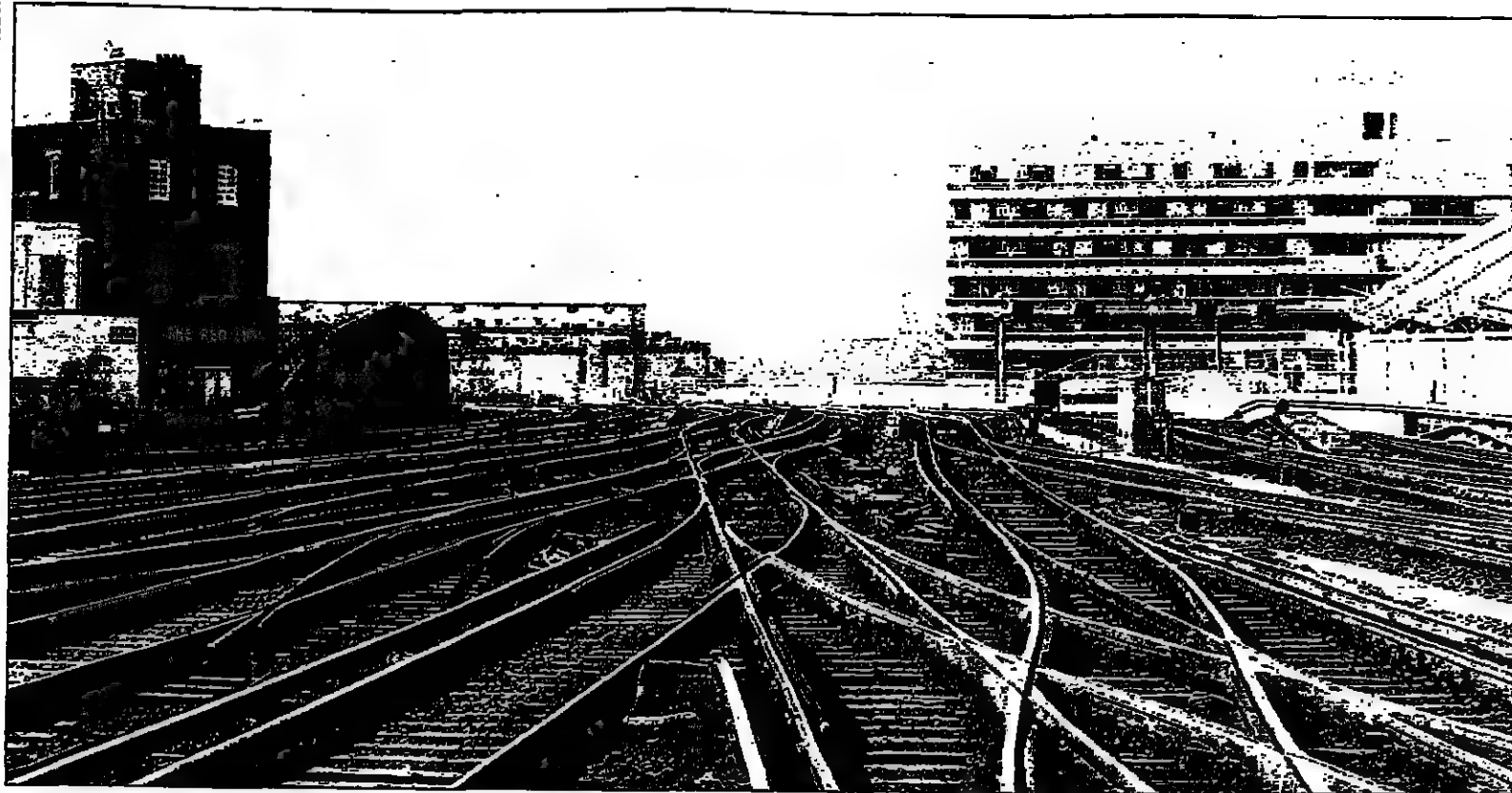
EVERY member of the Greenbury Committee will be getting a copy of *How to Hire and Fire Senior Executives* from Simon Jeffries, the author. Jeffries, a partner at top law firm McKenna & Co, says "the grandest executives are no different from other employees. Half of them deserve to be fired".

Umbrella man

DAVID PROSSER, chief executive of Legal & General, sported a tie covered with tiny multicoloured umbrellas to announce the company's £160 million special bonus to policyholders. But this was not standard-issue Legal & General corporate neckwear, bearing the broly logo, but a "cheap Hermes copy". Executives who wish to emulate the Prosser style will be disappointed to learn that Hermes stopped stocking the umbrella tie three years ago. It sold for a modest £65.

OLIVER ELLINGHAM, 11 years a Robert Fleming corporate finance man — and still only 38 — is joining Charterhouse Bank and its corporate team, and will be a member of its executive committee.

COLIN CAMPBELL



Taking a different route: the franchise bidders, particularly management teams, want to spell out their plans for the new-look railways

Bidders lined up for the first railway franchises

If all goes well, contracts will be signed by mid-December, Jonathan Prynn says

THE 60-part sale of Britain's railways has reached a critical phase. The Government may succeed in signing contracts with the first private sector operators of mainline rail services for nearly 50 years by the middle of next month, but no one involved is booking any Christmas holidays yet.

The first three franchises — South West Trains, Great Western and LTS Rail — are tantalisingly close to sale and preferred bidders are all but selected. For South West Trains, the competition is now down to Stagecoach and the management team in partnership with the transport subsidiary of Société Générale des Eaux, the French water giant. At Great Western, a little known outside-management buy-in, Resurgence Railways, appears to have been given the nod, to the chagrin of the well respected management team. However, much fine detail remains to be sorted out and the outcome could yet fall differently. Brian Scott, Great Western director, and his team are standing by just in case.

At LTS Rail, Chris Kinchin-Smith, director, and his management team, chaired by Charles Lennox-Corynham, look set to run their own railway early in the new year. This team, which has been carrying out the thankless task of turning round the so-called misery line, once Britain's most hated railway, saw off bids from Stagecoach and two bus consortiums.

If all goes well, contracts will be signed before Friday, December 15, the working deadline set by the Office of Rail Passenger Franchising (Opraf). A fallback deadline of Friday, December 22 has been pencilled in, in the event of last-minute snags, but things would have to go pretty badly wrong to cut it that fine.

None of these details has yet been publicly announced, or even confirmed. Never has any previous privatisation or contract award been so smothered in secrecy. Opraf and its adviser, Samuel Montagu, have observed a vow of silence that borders on the Trappist. They have also tried to place a gag on the bidders with the threat of that latter-day legal thumb-screw, the Financial Services Act.

The result has been intense frustration for the bidders, particularly the management teams, which are desperate to tell of their plans for the new-look railways. The vacuum has been filled by Labour politicians and disgruntled railway employees, who have maintained a steady and damaging stream of leaks about the absurdities and

dangers of breaking up the industry. The political stakes are massive. If the private sector companies taking over the franchises bring about genuine improvements to rail services, Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, will have delivered John Major his best Christmas present for years. If not, or if there are early publicity disasters on the scale of the Group Four fiasco when that company took over prisoner escort duties, the Government will have a gigantic turkey on its hands dangerously close to the next general election.

The financial calculations involved in privatisation are very fine. The entire grandiose operation depends on a Conservative act of faith: that the private sector will be able to put more burns on train seats than BR. If, through clever marketing, jazzier livery, and fancier meals, and above all, word of mouth, a significant number of travellers are persuaded to leave their cars at home and let the train take the strain, the privatisation could still end up as a triumph.

If not, the prospects are grim indeed. A failure to boost passenger numbers would make it difficult for private operators to justify investment in new trains from the newly privatised rolling

stock companies. Without new investment, rail commuters will continue to complain about their appalling travelling conditions. Others will prefer fighting through traffic jams in their cars. The domestic rail manufacturing industry, already half-starved for want of new orders, would quickly die. Struggling operators might blackmail the Government by demanding more subsidy to save them going bust.

A terrifying pre-Christmas premonition of this nightmare outcome was summoned last week by the ghost of privatisation past, James Sherwood, the president of Sea Containers. The company announced it was pulling out of the Great Western and South West franchise auctions after the subsidies it sought were judged excessive.

Mr Sherwood, who wanted to take on franchises for 12 years rather than the seven-year maximum allowed by the Treasury, gave a warning of a "deteriorating rail network" after privatisation. His withdrawal, though far from a terminal blow to rail privatisation, was scarcely a vote of confidence in the policy.

Sea Containers has a proven track record in transport privatisations, having taken on British Rail Hotels in 1983 and, more importantly, Sealink in

1984. Furthermore, Christopher Garnett, the former Eurotunnel director heading the Sea Containers bid, had been one of the few people outside the Government publicly prepared to bang the drum for privatisation. Even backbench MPs are rarely seen supporting the process in the national media because of its vote-losing image. Mr Garnett's enthusiasm had been deeply appreciated by Sir George.

It now looks increasingly likely that two management buy-outs and one management buy-in will take the first three franchises. Whether public opinion accepts that the £1 billion cost of privatisation was justified when businesses are merely being transferred to existing managers remains to be seen. It was always likely that management would use their unrivalled familiarity with operational and financial detail to lodge the most competitive bids. In spite of their poor public image, in some cases, local managements are very good indeed.

The first three franchises will represent, perhaps, 10 per cent of the total network. Will the public notice the difference? In many respects, the new operators' hands are tied. The Government has already announced tight restrictions on ticket prices and changes to the existing timetable. New rolling stock is probably three years away at the earliest. Some things can change though.

The marketing of rail travel, for all BR's worthy efforts, has failed. The image of trains remains defiantly unsexy — the anorak still reigns supreme. A recent survey of teenagers revealed that youngsters overwhelmingly lust for cars and regard trains as the "losers" way to travel. If the new generation of train operators can dispel that image and pull in more punters, the battle will have been half won.

Secondly, they can cut costs. It now seems certain that great swathes of BR middle managers are about to lose their jobs. Hence the leaks. With many of the costs fixed, reducing the headcount is one guaranteed way of achieving the financial alchemy of turning subsidy into profit.

This privatisation is like no other attempted anywhere else on earth. It was a fudge between the competitive ideology of the Thatcherite right in the mid-1980s and the real-world practicalities of running a railway. The resulting structure is simultaneously clever and fiendishly complicated. By Christmas next year, we will know whether it was the work of geniuses or madmen.



Sir George Young may deliver John Major's best Christmas present for years

Asian-Pacific region takes big steps to end trade barriers

Peregrine Hodson in Osaka looks at the contrasting priorities of members

A deal to prise open Asian markets to food from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States now appears within the grasp of the leaders of Pacific nations meeting at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) conference in Osaka.

Despite President Clinton's last-minute decision to bow out of the Apec meeting in Japan, the conference is moving towards a broad-ranging set of agreements to liberalise trade in the region. The talks began yesterday.

Gareth Evans, the Australian Foreign Minister, announced that participants had resolved divisive issues and were, more or less, in agreement. "On all the big issues — comprehensiveness, comparability, and non-discrimination — the text is settled," he said. "The major players are agreed and we're on our way to the implementation of a very good programme indeed."

Comprehensiveness is the principle by which Apec agreements are applied to all industrial sectors — including the area of agriculture that up to now has caused deep division among Apec members. On this issue, there are two opposing groups: the East Asian countries — Japan, China, South Korea and Taiwan, who wish to protect their domestic markets; and on the other side are US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, who want greater market liberalisation to sell their agricultural produce. Any agreement on "comprehensiveness" that does not fudge the issue and satisfies respective groups will be a significant achievement.

Comparability, the extent to which each Apec member should seek reciprocity in trade liberalisation, has been a point of disagreement between the US, which wishes to interpret the principle rigidly, and China, which favours a more flexible approach.

Non-discrimination is also a stumbling block between the US and China. At issue is the US annual renewal of MFN (most favoured nation) status — a relic of the Cold War era — which depends on inter alia Peking's progress on human rights. Up to now China has argued that the principle of non-discrimination should be applied throughout the Apec region, effectively abolishing the rigorous screening necessary for MFN status. The two countries have now agreed to pursue parallel, bilateral negotiations on the issue outside the Apec forum. If these three

problematic areas have indeed been effectively resolved, the summit may yet confound its sceptics, and by the typically Japanese art of compromise, the Apec summit in Osaka will be an unexpected success.

For the 18 participating countries of East Asia, North America and Australasia, the outcome will be an important step to creating a free trade zone to rival that of the European Union, and Nafta on the American continent.

Apec was founded in 1989. Two years later, its principles and objectives were agreed: to foster economic growth and develop a multi-lateral trading system in the region, reduce investment barriers, and encourage the free flow of capital, services and technology. In 1993, President Clinton, with US business at the centre of his foreign policy, saw Apec as a bridge into Asia and tried to turn it into a forum for regional trade negotiations.

The result was the Seattle "vision statement" — in which participants made idealistic promises of free trade and market liberalisation. Last year in Indonesia, the Seattle vision statement was consolidated by the Bogor declaration, a collection of "solid commitments" by the Apec nations to achieve regional free trade and investment by 2010, or in the case of less-developed countries, by 2020 at the latest.

Now it's Osaka's turn, but the earlier featherbrained statements and promises are coming home to roost and the verdict on the summit is already one of qualified failure. For anyone half familiar with the problems of the EC, the partial failure of this year's Apec summit should come as no surprise. Compared with the EC, Apec is still in its infancy, but in terms of size and cultural diversity, it is a far larger and more complex creature. Its members, including China, account for almost 60 per cent of the world economy and 46 per cent of world trade.

The Apec meeting in Osaka will reflect participants' domestic concerns. America and Australia may trumpet the ideal of market liberalisation, but in reality they seek markets for their agricultural produce. Most other members, principally Japan, prefer the pragmatism of gradual market integration. The best result will be a chorus in favour of consensus — with a few minor discords.

Truth of 'substantial profits' at T&N

From Lord Tombs
Sir, Andrew Spink's letter (Business Letters, November 3) is seriously in error in claiming that the "substantial profits in the middle 50 years of this century" — helped turn T&N into the successful multinational company we see today.

The facts are that in 1982 the company was on the verge of bankruptcy. The banks were not willing to extend their heavy lendings and the investing institutions were greatly concerned about the low share price of 25p.

It will be obvious that had the company failed, there would have been no possibility of claims such as the Arnley actions.

However, the Bank of England organised a rescue and I became chairman in October 1982. The company was extensively re-organised, with a gradual withdrawal from asbestos prod-

ucts and a concentration on automotive and engineering products.

The company gradually recovered and since my retirement in 1989 that progress has been maintained so that T&N is today, as Mr Spink acknowledges, a successful multinational company.

But it is in the efforts of the managements since 1982, leading to a revival in the company's fortunes, that have made possible the payment of damages to asbestos claimants. Had it not been for those efforts, there would have been no company — and no compensation!

Given the complete background, the comments of your *Tempos* correspondent were well judged.

Yours faithfully,

TOMBS,
Honington Lodge,
Honington,
Shipston-on-Stour,
Warwick.

Banking fears justified

From Mr David Gillett
Sir, John Barron fails to appreciate in his letter (November 9) the "fear" of trade unions and those staff members who will fall foul of the move to seven-day banking by NatWest. Surely, it will soon follow that most banks will

offer seven-day facilities with little or no consideration for the effect on the lives of their staff. May I venture to suggest that Mr Barron himself will not be providing banking services on a Sunday.
Yours faithfully,
DAVID GILLETT,
43 Copley Park,
SW16.

Pensions at risk from cut in ACT

From the Chairman of the National Association of Pension Funds

Sir, Pennington makes a valid point ("No such thing as a painless cut", November 3) in highlighting the effect on pension funds if the rate of ACT were cut. At a time when the Government is encouraging individuals to save for retirement, employers too need to be encouraged to set up pension funds and make adequate contributions for employees. It is vital that there is a stable fiscal regime in place to allow this.

Although reaction to the five-point cut in 1993 was muted, the impact is becoming apparent. Surpluses are diminishing and costs continuing to increase. Some big employers are even introducing reduced pension commitments for the future and transferring the investment risks to the members.

Another reduction in income, arising from a further cut in ACT, will increase costs and encourage more employers to take the easy way out — the very opposite of what the country needs and the Government should want.

The warning signs are there and NAPF hopes that this rumour is firmly laid to rest.
Yours faithfully,
TOM ROSS,
12-18 Grosvenor Gardens, SW1.

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Surprise strike at Ford may herald new militant era

By KEVIN EASON, MOTORING EDITOR

HUNDREDS of Ford car workers yesterday took their fight for bigger pay rises a stage further and walked out of its Dagenham, Essex, plant.

Union leaders are due to meet shop stewards next week after rejecting Ford's wage offer of 4.75 per cent in the first year and 4 per cent in the second year that would give more than 22,000 workers rises averaging £28-a-week over the two years.

But nearly 400 workers at Dagenham decided to hold their own protest, calling a meeting at the start of their shift yesterday and walking out on unofficial strike. The dispute closed the production

lines that paint, trim and assemble Fiesta cars. Though no other part of the plant was affected, Ford said output of 800 cars, worth an estimated £6.5 million, had been lost.

The rest of industry is now watching events at Ford, which traditionally sets the benchmark for wage rises for the autumn pay round. If there is to be a new round of union militancy as a reaction against five years of belt-tightening, Ford could be sending the first signals to the Government.

Ford workers accepted their lowest pay deal — 6 per cent over two years — for 20 years in 1993 as redundancies and

closures swept through the economy. But expectations have risen among workers suffering from the effects of falling house prices, particularly in the South of England. With the company reaping the benefits of big productivity increases and jobs apparently safe, their mood seems to have changed significantly.

Unions are demanding rises of 10 per cent plus a two-hour cut in the working week to 37 hours, their determination fed by the fact that Ford workers see themselves falling well down the wage league table for car workers.

Assembly line workers at Jaguar, a Ford subsidiary, are paid £317 for a 37-hour-a-week, while a similar semi-skilled worker at Dagenham currently gets £286 basic plus about £30 in allowances. Even with the extra £38-a-week in the company deal, Ford workers would still work two hours longer than colleagues in a subsidiary Ford business.

Ford said employees also enjoyed discounts of up to 30 per cent on the company's cars, adding: "the package also includes an extra 10 per cent on pensions payments. We stepped up our offer to reflect the hard work of our workforce, we cannot cut hours, however, at a time when we must be competitive in a very competitive marketplace."

But at Vauxhall, where 10,000 workers are voting on a 3.5 per cent increase for next year, managers have also drawn up a company-car scheme for workers with ten years' service or more, worth £100 a month on average. Basic pay at Vauxhall's factories at Luton, Bedfordshire, and Ellesmere Port, Merseyside, is £307 for an assembly worker with another £30 in guaranteed shift premiums for a 39-hour-a-week.

Vauxhall is also facing the possibility of a dispute but a spokesman said yesterday: "Our people are already among the best-paid in the industry. It is a fair package at a time when we are looking to win more investment for Britain in our plants."



David Dunn says that the market is competitive but Scapa is in an excellent position to take advantage of demand, especially in South-East Asia

Scapa benefits from recovery in paper

By PHILIP PANGALOS

ACQUISITIONS and organic growth, combined with improved trading conditions in the paper industry, allowed Scapa Group, which makes engineered fabrics, rolls and roll coverings for the paper industry, to lift first-half profits 20 per cent.

Improved margins and new products helped pre-tax profits to climb to £27.7 million (£23 million) in the six months to September 30, as turnover, boosted by acquisitions, rose 21 per cent to £248.2 million.

The company has benefited from the substantial recovery in the paper industry, which has seen pulp prices more than double in the past 18 months. However, there has been some more recent evidence of "inventory rebalancing" by a number of players after the widespread stocking-up that followed the enormous price increases in the industry.

Scapa has spent about £60 million during the past 11 months on seven acquisitions. Gearing at interim stage was 38.6 per cent, but has risen to about 45 per cent on completion of the National Filtration acquisition. Strong cash generation is expected to help

gearing to fall to nearer 40 per cent by the year-end.

David Dunn, chief executive, said: "The paper industry remains strong and demand for our products is running at a high level, with our major manufacturing units fully loaded. The market is competitive but we are in an excellent position to take advantage of current and future demand, especially in South-East Asia."

He added: "Prospects remain positive for our paper-related products. We also expect to benefit further from the technology exchange between our European and American speciality tapes businesses."

The interim dividend is raised 5 per cent to 1.79p (1.7p), payable on February 2, from earnings ahead 27 per cent to 7.9p (6.2p) a share. Scapa shares firmed 4p to 224p.

US offer for Unipalm advances

THE recommended offer from UUNET Technologies, the Nasdaq-quoted US Internet service provider, for Unipalm Group, the largest UK access provider for the Internet, has gone unconditional (Philip Pangalos writes).

Yesterday, Unipalm shares soared 57p to 755p. The offer was initially worth 450p a share, valuing Unipalm at £97 million.

However, a strong rally for UUNET shares on the Nasdaq market has put a final value of 741p per share on Unipalm, valuing the company at about £160 million, compared with a flotation price of 100p in 1994.

UUNET has received 90.54 per cent acceptance and the offer remains open until further notice.

Cortworth shares priced for float

By PHILIP PANGALOS

SHARES in Cortworth, the specialist engineering, plastics and controls company, have been priced at 150p each, with next month's placing and intermediaries offer capitalising the Coventry company at £71.6 million.

The flotation is valued at £36.4 million, with about £6 million of new money for the company, which was formed in December 1993 after a £40.3 million management buyout from Williams Holdings.

The proceeds will leave the group ungeared, with about £4.5 million used to provide funds for future growth and investment, through product development and acquisitions.

The group, which employs about 1,200 people, has seen strong organic growth in turnover and profitability since the buyout.

Cortworth made an operat-

ing profit of £6.4 million in 1994, on turnover of £58.3 million. The group's directors have forecast a 32 per cent increase in 1995's operating profit to not less than £8.5 million.

The 1995 forecast pro forma earnings are 12.2p and the notional gross dividend yield at the issue price is 4.8 per cent, with the shares on 12.3 times 1995 earnings.

A complicated structure will see Williams Holdings end up with a shareholding of 19.99 per cent post-float, with existing venture capitalists holding 6 per cent of Cortworth and a management team with a combined stake of 23.2 per cent.

Samuel Montagu is sponsor to the float, with James Capel acting as broker to the issue. Dealings are due to begin on December 4.

Regulator reviews power station sale

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

STEPHEN Littlechild, the electricity regulator, is studying details of PowerGen's performance-related and leased-based sale of two of its power stations to Eastern Group, now part of Hanson.

PowerGen, the smaller of the two electricity generators, had been forced to sell the plants under competition guidelines drafted by Professor Littlechild. However, it is not clear whether the arrangement complies with the spirit of the order because the generator will maintain an interest in the earnings of the plants. PowerGen is taking half of an expected total of £450 million for the plants in a lump sum, with the other half streamed over eight years — the life forecast for the stations, in Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire — in payments geared to output.

A spokeswoman for the Office of Electricity Regulation said that Professor Littlechild would make a ruling in the next few weeks. PowerGen, which is awaiting an Office of Fair Trading

statement on whether it can proceed with its planned takeover of Midlands Electricity, denied that the arrangement sidestepped Professor Littlechild's plans. Ed Wallis, chief executive, said: "There was nothing in the requirement which prohibited ensuring good value for our shareholders."

The generator will lose 2 to 3 per cent of its market share with the sale of the plants. At the end of its half-year to October 1, PowerGen's market share stood at 22.3 per cent, down 1 per cent from the previous year but ahead of the company's own expectations as more competition enters the electricity market. Other companies' misfortune helped PowerGen's share, with delays in opening stations and hitches at others.

Interim pre-tax profits rose by 13 per cent to £133 million. The company, which intends to whittle down its dividend cover, raised the interim payment by 30 per cent, to 6.5p. It is payable on December 20.



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Call to help savers plan for care in old age

By ROBERT MILLER

THE influential National Association of Pension Funds, whose members are responsible for £300 billion of assets, has called on the Government to provide a new savings vehicle to help people plan for long-term care in their old age.

Ann Robinson, Director-General of the NAPF, also warned ministers not to "monkey" with the current system by attempting to divert monies from pension fund contributions to fund Long-Term Care (LTC) policies. Dr Robinson was speaking at the launch yesterday of a discussion paper on how to fund long-term care for the one in six people likely to need intensive care later in life. Copies of the document have been sent to Government ministers.

The NAPF's Research and

Planning Committee, headed by Peter Murray, estimates that such care typically costs up to £400 a week and can last for between two to three years. Dr Robinson said: "If the right conditions were created by the Inland Revenue, I believe it would be possible for pension schemes to make a useful contribution in partnership with the insurance industry for their long-term care."

Dr Robinson accepts, however, that selling the message to the public that they should dig deeper into their savings and incomes to buy long-term care policies will be difficult. She said: "Evidence demonstrates that most people are unlikely to be persuaded to start saving early enough, and therefore some form of compulsory contributions towards a pre-funded insurance arrangement will be necessary."

In Holland, compulsory LTC insurance covering all citizens was introduced in 1966, with employers paying the contributions for their work force and self-employed people meeting the cost themselves.

One solution to the growing problem of funding long-term care for the elderly and one that does not force them to sell their homes and assets to pay the bills is already up and running in the US. Four states, Connecticut, New York, California and Indiana, give guarantees to individuals who take out recognised private insurance of a specified amount that after three years the State will pick up the tab on a non-means tested basis.

Any move to extend the availability of LTCs must be accompanied by a proper regulatory regime and high standards, said the NAPF, to stop "unfortunate events occurring". To date, only a few insurers have shown any appetite to enter the LTC market. Commercial Union being one of those. Under its Well-Being policy, a 61-year old male paying a regular monthly premium of £46.20, or a single premium of £4,616, would be entitled to £10,000 worth of annual benefit to cover home care or nursing home costs.

Nigel Waite, a director of Barclays Life argues that there is no need for additional tax breaks or incentives to buy LTC policies. He says that very few people make as much use of the generous pension investment levels as they are entitled to and that if they did so the extra benefits would amply cover long-term care costs.



Ann Robinson: "Don't monkey with the system"

Bank acquisition price in Britain 'too high'

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

NATIONAL Australia Group, the banking group that owns Yorkshire and Clydesdale banks, wants to acquire another bank or building society in Britain, but believes prices are too high.

Glenn Barnes, managing director of National Australia's UK operations, said the group "continues to look at all opportunities in the market". But he added: "Given the current position of the market and that the British market is over-served, I would say that people are asking too much. Financial services assets do tend to be highly priced."

The bank's name has been linked to most of the recent

bank and building society takeovers and mergers. Mr Barnes would not comment on specific targets but said National Australia looked at opportunities as they arose.

National Australia yesterday announced a 15.3 per cent rise in net profits to £1.97 billion (£895 million) in the year to September 30. Pre-tax profits were 7.9 per cent higher at £2.67 billion.

Its four banks in the UK and Ireland suffered a 1.2 per cent fall in profits to £577 million after £18 million costs associated with October's launch of the new UK-based National Australia Life operation, increased investment in technol-

ogy, and the development of specialist banking units. Yorkshire Bank's pre-tax profits were marginally higher at £138.5 million, affected by a one-off £8 million charge for property revaluation.

Clydesdale Bank's profits were up from £110.6 million to £113.5 million. Northern Bank's profits fell by £5.4 million to £56.5 million after exceptional restructuring costs of £3.4 million and a £3.5 million increase in bad debt charges.

National Irish Bank, based in the Republic of Ireland, reported pre-tax profits of £20.7 million against £19.2 million for the previous year.

Prospects good for 600 Group

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

INVESTMENT in machine tools — which is often used as a measure of business confidence as factories pump more cash into equipment ahead of anticipated orders — has lifted, pulling up the prospects of The 600 Group.

The company, one of the country's leading machine-tool makers, said that sales had risen 22 per cent to £67.5 million in the six months to September 30, while the order book has improved 30 per cent.

Its half-year pre-tax profit jumped from £2.5 million to £4.8 million although the figure was flattened by an injection of £1.8 million from the pension fund. The group may gain a further £12 million after valuation of the fund which is now serving vastly reduced numbers. The fund has a surplus in excess of Inland Revenue regulations after halving its workforce over the past five years to 1,400.

The interim dividend is 0.75p (0.5p).

Czech Republic wins entry to OECD

By COLIN NARBROUGH

THE Czech Republic's rapid switch from communist command economy to free-market society is to be rewarded with membership of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the "rich man's club".

The OECD, based in Paris

and linking the world's most advanced industrial economies, last admitted a member with Mexico in 1994, but only under strong US pressure.

The Czech Republic, which emerged from four decades of communism in the "Velvet Revolution" of 1989, will be the

first former Soviet bloc country to join the OECD when it signs up as its 26th member on November 28, the date the organisation announced yesterday. The final obstacle fell when the Czech parliament last month approved making Czech currency convertible.

C E Heath to hive off computing

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

C E HEATH is to hive off its computer services division into a separate company and focus exclusively on insurance broking.

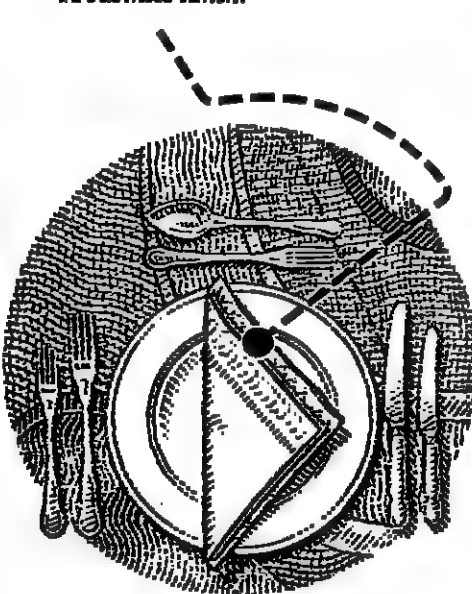
Unveiling a flat first-half performance, with operating profit before tax unchanged at £6.4 million, broking revenues down and a fall in computer services profits, Heath said the demerger would take place early next year. Shareholders will receive one new computer share for every Heath share.

Peter Presland, the chief executive of CE Heath becomes chief executive of the new company. John Mackenzie Green, group managing director, becomes chief executive of CE Heath and Christopher Sporborg, a non-executive director, becomes deputy chairman.

Both insurance broking and computer services reported a fall in pre-tax profits for the half year to September 30, with insurance off £1.6 million at £3.8 million and computer services down £600,000 to £2 million. The interim dividend has been cut to 3p (5p). Mr Presland added the total dividend is likely to be cut also.

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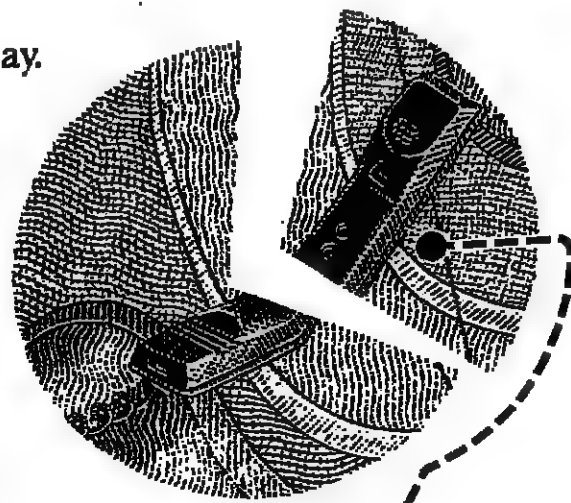
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This week The Times has been offering readers the exclusive opportunity to send for three free CDs. Today's coupon allows you to order the last two, The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra plays Hits of Pink Floyd and London Music playing Handel — Messiah Highlights, details of which, including the track listing, appeared in the newspaper on Tuesday-Wednesday.



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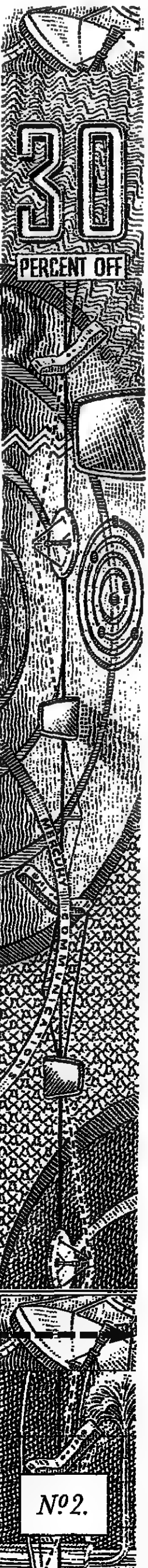
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Estée Lauder restructure is far from a cosmetic change



Hurley: domestic problems

FROM RICHARD THOMSON
IN NEW YORK

ELIZABETH HURLEY'S problems with her boyfriend, Hugh Grant, filled the headlines at precisely the moment she became the new advertising face of Estée Lauder, the US cosmetics conglomerate. But her personal travails have proved a mere irritation compared with the strange doings of the Lauder family.

It is the interaction of three key personalities which has led directly to 12 per cent of one of the most exclusive family-owned companies in the US being offered for sale to the public today, with the aim of raising about \$385 million.

There is Estée, the founder now in her late 80s but still in control

and there are her two sons, in their 50s and greying although still known in the company as "the boys". Leonard, the elder, has proved to be a steady, even brilliant, chief executive of the company, while Ronald, the deeply indebted younger son, wants little to do with it. Put simply, the share issue is designed to solve the problem of Ronald's debts.

Ronald likes to spend money on a huge scale. He has been buying art since he was a young man and no longer has enough space in his two-floor Park Avenue apartment in Manhattan to accommodate his collection of medieval, 20th century and Chinese paintings and statuary. Insiders estimate he has spent about \$100 million on it all.

He owns several estates, includ-

ing a Long Island country house with a 24-seat private cinema. He once spent \$2.5 million to buy out a neighbour who planned to build a house that would have partially blocked the sea view from his estate in upstate New York.

Ronald owes Estée Lauder and its bankers, JP Morgan, \$209 million. He has no wish to fulfil his mother's dream that he should share the company with Leonard, so the logical step was to restructure the company's share holdings and allow him to withdraw some of his wealth in cash.

When it was mooted last year, Leonard did not like the idea. This was hardly surprising since, unlike his brother, he has devoted most of his life to the family firm.

Leonard became chief executive

in 1982 and, under his benign and patrician leadership, sales have risen nearly fourfold to \$3 billion. Nearly 40 cents of every dollar spent on US department-store cosmetics goes to Estée Lauder.

The company was started by his mother in 1946. She sold home-made creams in a New York beauty parlour before deciding to sell them through department stores rather than pharmacies as the established perfume brands did. By the time Ronald was growing up, however, the business was well-established and the Lauders were rich.

His mother appears to have refused him nothing. "She is very indulgent of him," one family friend commented to *The Wall Street Journal* recently. "Leonard is her buddy, and Ronald is her

child." Although he travelled a lot, Ronald stayed close to his mother, with houses that neighbour hers in New York State and Palm Beach. He took little direct part in running the company — although his \$3.5 million salary as a senior director is still \$500,000 higher than Leonard's.

In 1992, Ronald asked Leonard for a large loan to fund his growing European investments on top of the \$68 million loan he already had from the company. It was a step too far and Leonard would not cooperate. Lawyers were brought in for the first time to handle negotiations between the normally close-knit family. Ronald got his way as usual and a \$125 million loan was arranged with JP Morgan, backed by his preferred stock.

Break for the Border ahead 17%

Break for the Border, owner of live venues such as the Brixton Academy and Shepherd's Bush Empire, has lifted half-year pre-tax profits 17 per cent to £285,000.

The company's spate of acquisitions helped turnover to double to £7.4 million. Robert Gunlack, chairman, said more purchases were planned and the company was keen to expand the successful Café En Seine format from Dublin to London.

The shares slipped 2p to 68p. The dividend was increased to 0.5p (0.33p).

Forward up

Forward group, the specialist electronics group, put in a sparkling performance at the half-year stage to have more than doubled half-year pre-tax profits to £2 million. Turnover rose 90 per cent to £20.5 million, helped by the acquisitions of Ferranti International, Hybrid Manufacturing and Exacta. Forward gained an official Stock Exchange listing in June after a £7.5 million share placement. The shares fell 35p to 640p. A dividend of 3.2p (2.5p) will be paid on January 12.

Hotel talks

Park Lane Hotel said that it is in talks with "various parties" which might lead to an offer for the company. The board added that Samuel Montagu & Co. its adviser, is examining the approaches and it urged shareholders to take no action pending further board advice.

Yates at £3m

Better than expected turnover at newly opened branches helped raise pre-tax profit at Yates Brothers Wine Lodges to £3.2 million (£2.1 million) for the half year to October 1. Sales rose 19 per cent to £29.2 million and earnings per share increased 38 per cent to 5.8p. An interim dividend of 1.2p per share (1p) will be paid on February 21.

Airbus move

Airtours, Britain's second largest tour operator, said yesterday its Airtours International Airways subsidiary has agreed to lease seven Airbus A320-200 airliners for the group's tour business.

Capital Radio sees opportunity to grow abroad

BY PHILIP PANGALOS

CAPITAL RADIO, Britain's largest commercial radio group, has delivered another surge in underlying full-year profits and confirmed that it is looking to expand further, with plans to bid for new UK licences when they become available next year, as well as expanding overseas.

A contribution from Southern Radio, acquired in May for £32 million, helped headline pre-tax profits to rise by 42 per cent, to £36.5 million, in the year to September 30, and a £13.4 million exceptional disposal profit on the company's stake in Metro Radio saw total pre-tax profits surge 80

per cent, to £39.9 million. Turnover, boosted by acquisition, rose by 30 per cent, to £67.4 million, with continuing businesses up 21 per cent.

Ian Irvine, chairman, said: "This has been another excellent year. We have increased our turnover and profitability to record levels."

Richard Eyre, managing director, said that an increased share of advertising revenue for the commercial radio sector, up to about 4.2 per cent, from 2.8 per cent in 1994, was the main engine of Capital's growth. Capital had been "a net beneficiary" in spite of greater competition, especially

in the key London market, where the likes of Virgin are competing for market share, he said.

During the period, Capital retained its licences in Birmingham, Kent and Sussex, and disposed of minority shareholdings in Metro Radio and Chiltern, giving it net cash and short-term investments totalling about £23 million.

Capital intended to bid for new licences, initially targeting the Yorkshire and East Midlands region, Mr Eyre said. "The UK radio industry continues to offer significant opportunities for expansion," he said.

Mr Eyre said that Capital would like to take advantage

of liberalisation of the radio industry across the world, and wants to provide services to overseas stations. "We have begun to investigate a number of promising overseas markets where deregulation and privatisation are creating real opportunities for experienced radio operators," he said.

Capital is understood to be looking at partnership opportunities in New Zealand, South Africa, India, France and Germany. Capital also intends to open a themed "radio restaurant" at its new headquarters in Leicester Square, central London.

A final dividend of 7p (5p), due on January 19, lifts the total by 41 per cent, to 10.25p, from earnings per share up 39 per cent to 36.2p (22.8p). The shares rose 15p to 455p.

Tempus, page 28



Richard Eyre, managing director of Capital Radio, which aims to bid for new UK radio licences and open a restaurant

CRA dispute triggers strikes

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

CRA, the Australian mining company that was recently merged with its British parent RTZ to create the world's biggest mining group, has become embroiled in a dramatic showdown with Australia's powerful unions over collective bargaining that is set to plunge the entire country into industrial chaos.

What started out as a straightforward dispute over CRA's plans to introduce individual contracts at its bauxite mine in Queensland has suddenly spiralled out of control as one after another of Australia's key industries prepares to strike in protest at what they see as a ploy to weaken the unions.

More than 3,000 coal workers walked out of seven CRA mines across the country on Wednesday in a 48-hour stoppage and, from midnight last night, Australia's national ports shut down as shipping and maritime workers began a five-day strike. Next Tuesday, Australia's entire mining industry will stage a week-long strike which looks set to spill over into the country's power, oil, chemical manufac-

turing and transport industries. At the heart of the dispute are 75 workers at CRA's bauxite mine at Weipa, who went on strike three weeks ago after refusing to sign non-union contracts offering pay rises of \$515,000 (£6,800) or more. Strikers say they were not prepared to give up union representation and their right to collective bargaining.

CRA says its employees should be allowed to choose individual staff contracts with higher pay. Stressing that it is acting within the law, the

company has made it clear that it wants to negotiate directly with its workers rather than via a union. For the past two years its subsidiary Colmalec has been offering individual contracts to its workers at Weipa and 400 have already signed.

Shares in CRA, still a separately listed company, dropped another 24 cents to \$30.64 on the Australian stock exchange as analysts estimated that a strike at its coal mines alone could wipe \$30 million off its revenues and \$3 million from net profits each week.

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We're planning a quiet celebration.

GE90

The world's largest low-noise engine, the new Boeing 777, was just delivered to British Airways. But you won't hear it, thanks to a lot of noise about it.

Thanks to the quiet operation of its GE90 engines, the 777 generates significantly less noise at take-off than other large aircraft. And for anyone sitting inside, it's even quieter. The GE90-powered 777 is as easy on the environment as it is on the ear. Not only does it produce no visible smoke, it also emits substantially lower emissions than standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

British Airways committed to the GE90 in 1991 because we committed to delivering tomorrow's reliability to an exceptional standard today. The GE90 is a powerful, efficient engine. Since then, we've been working hard to make the GE90 even quieter and more efficient. And now, the first British Airways 777 is ready to serve our global routes.

So be on the lookout for the new GE90-powered Boeing 777. Because you're likely to see it before you hear it.

GE Aircraft Engines

Cable & Wireless *interim* results

Financial Highlights for Six Months to 30 September 1995

	1995 £m	Growth %
Turnover	2,711	7
Operating Profit	636	7
Pre-tax Profit	815	44
Pre-tax Profit excluding exceptional item	616	9
Earnings per share	19.6p	65
Earnings per share excluding exceptional item	13.0p	9
Interim Dividend	3.08p	9

The increase in earnings demonstrates our success in Asia, Europe and the US/Caribbean in developing our core business areas and reflects our management focus on delivering consistent and superior earnings growth.

We aim to deliver innovative high-quality and cost-effective services to our customers worldwide by capitalising on our international partnering skills.

We are continuing to expand our mobile networks and we now have operations in more countries than any other telecoms company.

Our Business Networks are growing rapidly as more multi-national customers choose our global communications services.

We have rationalised our business portfolio by selling our Mercury CPE Division and Mannesmann Mobilfunk investment.



THE CABLE & WIRELESS FEDERATION

An alliance of the world's most creative communications companies.

Interim dividend of 3.08p per ordinary share, with scrip alternative, will be paid on 28 February 1996 to Shareholders on the Register at 12 December 1995. If you have any enquiries as a UK Shareholder, please call us on 0171-315 4455. A copy of the Interim Report will be posted to Shareholders on 23 November 1995 and will be available to the public from that date from KK Claydon, Company Secretary, Cable and Wireless plc, 124 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8RX.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

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هكذا من الراحل

Strong gains bring record close

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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POP 5

Prepare to relish the Irish warmth, wit and lyrical beauty of Luka Bloom's singing



POP 6

A hard edge but plenty of melody: Foo Fighters continue to impress the discerning

THE ARTS



CHOICE 1

Anton Lesser is back in London with O'Keefe's farce *Wild Oats*

VENUE: In repertoire at the Lyttelton Theatre



CHOICE 2

George Benjamin conducts the British premiere of his new work

VENUE: Tomorrow at the Queen Elizabeth Hall

Transplant comes into Bloom

New York and a new name have put Luka Bloom back on track, says Alan Jackson

Of all the gigs I have seen this year, none has moved or uplifted me more than that by the singer-songwriter Luka Bloom at Camden's Jazz Café in August. I knew and liked the three albums he had recorded for Warner Brothers, particularly 1992's *The Acoustic Motorbike*, but was still unprepared for the power, urgency, wit and lyricism of his live performance. Telling him this on the eve of his first-ever British tour brings a blush both to my face and that of the Irishman. "40 years old going on 16".

Bloom has a wonderfully warm and intimate singing style, made all the more affecting by the consistently open-hearted tone of his material. The aim, he says, is to evolve towards simplicity in his writing, to shrug off an earlier need to impress. He hopes he will most fully realise this in the new album he will begin recording in January, but he admits that, like everything of worth that he has achieved in his life, such maturity has been hard won.

The youngest of six children in a family from Co. Kildare, he first picked up a guitar at the age of ten — a moment of epiphany that brought him a first hint of relief from the tragedy which permanently coloured family life. When Bloom was just 18 months old, his father went into a local hospital for a minor operation and never awoke from the anaesthetic. Bloom's love and admiration for his late mother had just one negative result: attempting to realise her ambition that he should achieve a college degree, he resisted his



Lone ranger: Luka Bloom — the Irish are "much more comfortable singing about dying than about making love"

instinct that only a career in music would make him happy.

Eventually, after moving to Dublin but dropping out of various unsuitable courses, he succumbed to the inevitable. He lived for a while in Germany and Holland and recorded three LPs for tiny, independent labels under his real name of Barry Moore. A deep-rooted unhappiness prevailed, however. "I had a sense of not belonging anywhere," he says. "Not in Ireland, not in my family, ultimately not even in my own skin... That's a frightening state for anyone to be in, and when it's complicated by an addiction to one drug or another, it becomes a hellhole."

The singer's subsequent successful battle with alcoholism is something he is reticent about discussing. But by the mid-1980s he was ready to re-

engage with the creative world again. "Songs began to pour out. But because nobody in Ireland noticed, I realised I would have to change my situation still further. That was when I went to America, and changed my name."

After suffering at the hands of what he describes as Dublin's potentially brutal cynicism, he found the enthusiasm of New York audiences massively rewarding. There was liberation too: "I was a gunslinger with no history. I had a clean slate. Nobody asked about my past. Just being there with this name and my guitar and songs seemed to be enough for them."

With its inspired combination of Irish balladeering and rap, *The Acoustic Motorbike* brought Bloom to the attention of those radio programmers

and listeners who would not normally be seen dead entering a folk club and greatly increased the number of his fans. This urge for diversity led not only to the best song he has written to date, *Bridge of Sorrows*, but also to a triumphant reworking of the L.L. Cool J hit *I Need Love*, in which a cock-of-the-walk acknowledges that a promiscuous lifestyle is not bringing him fulfilment.

"I've noticed that, particularly when I perform it in Ireland, people get nervous as the lyrics become more juicy," Bloom says with a smile. "Perhaps that's because not a lot of sex comes through in Irish music — generally we're much more comfortable singing about dying than about making love. I can be as shy as the next fellow when it comes to talking about these things, but that made the song a

double challenge for me. And I love the fact that it's opened up a new world."

It will feature alongside original material in the set he is performing between now and December 4 as part of the Celtic Swing Tour, for which he is teamed with accordionist Sharon Shannon and the former De Danaan singer, Eleanor Shanley. Apart from London and Glasgow, Bloom has never played any of the towns on the tour and says he looks upon the experience as a new beginning. "I've never felt as open as I do now. It's a great time for me to be starting in this country."

• *The Celtic Swing Tour plays the Irish Regent tonight, and the following venues over the next seven days: Sunday — Cambridge Corn Exchange; Tuesday — Torquay Riviera; Wednesday — Northampton Dergate; Thursday — Leeds Irish Centre.*

Fighting out of the shadow of Nirvana

The Foo Fighters
Brixton Academy

despite press speculation, none of his songs are about the late Kurt Cobain

This time round, Grohl did not make any references to Cobain at all. In fact, his comments were limited to name checks for some of the songs, polite thanks and a series of unexplained belches. During his most verbose moment, he asked the audience if they would like the band to finish a song called *Good Grief* "the

Pixies way or the Def Leppard way". He demonstrated both and then opted for the more metallic, latter version.

Rather than wasting time on between-song banter, Grohl articulated himself best by putting passion and anger into songs such as *I'll Stick Around*, flailing around the stage while playing opposite fellow guitarist Pat Smear, who was also in the last incarnation of Nirvana.

Most of the set was made up of songs from the album, including a stroll through the lounge-lizard territory of their current single, *For All the Cows*. During the encore, the band played three new songs, each revealing a different side of their sound and none sounding like Nirvana.

Perhaps the day is not too far away when someone talks about the Foo Fighters without even mentioning Nirvana.

ANN SCANLON

LONDON

BEHIND THE MAGIQUE: A well and for a while, the composer's major theatre works. The recent *Magique* opera with Christopher Hogwood, directed by David Pountney, was a triumph. The *Magique* opera, with The Fairy Queen, Dido, and a score of songs, was a triumph. The *Magique* opera, with The Fairy Queen, Dido, and a score of songs, was a triumph.

WILD OATS: Jeremy's highly enjoyable revival of John O'Keefe's 1971 farce returns, following a brief national tour. Anton Lesser is back, the touring actor who has played a patchwork of roles he has played with Alan Cox. James Haden and Sarah Woodward (National Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Tonight-Mon, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

THE COMPOSER CONDUCTS: The London Sinfonietta continues its occasional series when George Benjamin conducts the UK premiere of his own *Three Inventions for Chamber Orchestra* (London, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Tonight-Mon, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

THE CABINET OF DOCTOR CALIGARI: A stage version of the German silent classic. Good sets, unevenly muscled, but a haunting performance by John Ramm at the Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (0171-928 2252) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

DEAD FUNNY: Belinda Lang, Kevin McNally and Sam Kelly in Terry Johnson's sharply funny play about comedy and the art of the lie. (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

THE HOTHOUSE: Assailed by a mysterious and sinister force, Harold Pinter is marvellously funny, handling the strong cast in his own, long-running play. (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

THE JUNGLE BOOK: Tim Supple directs his adaptation of these of Kipling's *Mowgli* stories for the Christmas season. (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

THE MACK AND MABEL: Jerry Herman's musical set in early Hollywood. Fine songs, though a troublesome book. (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

THE PATRIOT FOR ME: James Wilby plays the part of a young man who is trapped by his homosexuality into betraying his emperor. (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

THE SCARLET LETTER: Six and eight in 17th-century Massachusetts. (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

A WALK IN THE CLOUDS: (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm and Sat, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

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WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Kris Anderson

ELSEWHERE
BASHINGSTONE: A most entertaining evening is promised when the scintillating soprano Felicity Lott teams up with pianist Graham Johnson in another *Requiem* recital. (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Sat, 7.30pm and Sun, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

LODGESIDE: Paul Kenyon, Britain's "Man of the Musical", directs Frank Lasser's song-packed *Gypsy* and *Doll* for this year's Christmas show. (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Sat, 7.30pm and Sun, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

MAHONISTON: The Union, principal conductor of the Union Orchestra, conducts the *Halle Orchestra* for a programme of Baroque, Bachmann, and the European premiere of Chon Yif's *Piano Concerto*. (Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-928 2252) Sat, 7.30pm and Sun, 2.15pm and 7.45pm (S)

THEATRE GUIDE
Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

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CINEMA GUIDE

A daily guide to cinema listings compiled by Kris Anderson

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■ FILM

Shaken but not stirred: the British hero and British villain have survived against all odds



■ THEATRE 1

Few rewards as a poorly spoken and oddly directed *King Lear* with Warren Mitchell comes to London

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ THEATRE 2

...and on the London fringe a promising idea about a greedy grannie is not well developed



■ MUSIC

Nobuko Imai leads a tribute to Hindemith and the viola in a Wigmore Hall festival

From Drummond and Holmes to Bond, the British hero is an unchanging movie stereotype. Geoff Brown reports

Have stiff upper lip, well-travelled

Bond, James Bond that is, was an American ornithologist who published a classic reference book on West Indian birds. Ian Fleming, who had a holiday home in Jamaica, thought the name perfect for the new Secret Service hero in his thriller *Casino Royale*, published in 1953. "Brief, unromantic, and yet very masculine," Fleming said. And so British, too: you can almost see the sober dress, the tidy haircut, the stiff upper lip.

In the 40 years since then, Bond has been played on the screen by, among others, a Scotsman (you know who), an Australian (George Lazenby), and now an Irishman with a sardonic twinkle (Pierce Brosnan).

But the character is still quintessentially British; and as you watch Brosnan in *GoldenEye* — the name of Fleming's Jamaican home — you realise that his nationality is a crucial part of his survival kit.

In the new film, M, portrayed in a gender switch by Judi Dench, details the criminal charges against agent 007. Bond is sexist, misogynist, a dinosaur, she says. But he has a perfect excuse: he is British.

Just as Noël Coward knew that only mad dogs and Englishmen went out in the midday sun, so audiences across the world instinctively accept that only a British spy would sally forth in these politically correct times armed with tailored suits, fast cars, sexual banter, a bow tie, and a stomach lined with martinis shaken but not stirred. He is an anachronism, proud and resplendent.

6 Bond lives with Boadicea in the realm of British myth

Bond's nationality was not always so clear. When, in 1954, the CBS television network used the *Casino Royale* plot for an hour-long episode in its drama series *Climax*, he suddenly became an American CIA agent with porcupine hair. As played by Barry Nelson, he was about as dapper as a lawnmower. The network then toyed with a series built round the character; Fleming wrote six episode outlines in 1958.

But it was not to be. When *Dr No* reached the big screen in 1962, Bond became British, albeit with Sean Connery's Scottish burr. And so he has remained, hopping round the globe at the behest of Whitehall superiors, combating multinational villains, charming birds of all kinds from the trees.

Why has the British hero such an international appeal in movie adventures and thrillers? Partly because popular fiction paved the way. Generations brought up on Conan Doyle, or Sapper's stories about "Bulldog" Drummond, grew accustomed to well-dressed British gentlemen wittily and elegantly solving crimes. When sound came to movies, Ronald Colman was ready to lend his mellifluous voice to Drummond, the former army officer who turns to combating peacetime ills as a way of filling the empty hours.

No later versions of Sapper's tales have the charm Colman put into *Bulldog Drummond* or *Bulldog Drummond Strikes Back*. Later on in the 1930s Basil Rathbone took on the mantle



"Generations grew accustomed to well-dressed British gentlemen wittily and elegantly solving crimes": Ronald Colman as Bulldog Drummond

of Sherlock Holmes, presiding over motley adventures with that velvet voice laced with a touch of cunning. He was not one for physical derring-do, but he had a brain, and he used it: something rarely in evidence with an American detective such as Philip Marlowe, who was always blun-

dering into tight spots and facing the barrel of a gun.

Besides being suave, the British hero should also be jaunty. David Niven is the archetype here: the kind of man who is clubbable, prone to horseplay, but will come through strongly when the chips are down. Just the man who might be able to make good his bet and whip round the world in 80 days, as he did in 1956 when Mike Todd brought Jules Verne's adventures of Phileas Fogg to the screen. Niven's dapper heroes love to eye ladies, toss back the cocktails and rattle off witty remarks: you can feel Bond just around the corner.

When Bond finally arrived on screen in the 1960s, being British was fashionable. The Bond adventures were never

"fab". Like the Beatles or Carnaby Street, but with their heady escapism, their glamour and gumsmack, they played a key part in the country's pop culture and its exportation across the world.

Initially, the world was unsure about Bond: Tokyo's marketing people were ready to call *Dr No* the Japanese equivalent of *We Don't Want a Doctor*. But international audiences soon latched on to the character, and foreign box-office grosses and merchandising became key factors in any financial calculations.

To judge by the media frenzy surrounding *GoldenEye*, the world still loves Bond some 18 films after *Dr No*. By rights, the character should not work at all. Communism's collapse has robbed Bond of

the obvious enemy, and every one of his tastes falls foul of modern thinking. Fast cars: doesn't he know about exhaust emissions and global warming? Fast ladies: has the man never heard of Aids, or even feminism?

He is also returning to the movies at a time when most British characters on international screens are villains. If you want a professional killer or a crime mastermind, current Hollywood thinking is "Buy British". Maybe this is because we are so good at hypocrisy. We can lay on the charm to entrap someone, then turn as cold and violent as an ice-pick.

Sandra Bullock found this out in *The Net* when she met Jeremy Northam, the handsome devil sent to obliterate

her from the world. We also excel at scene-stealing: Kevin Costner will not act again with Alan Rickman in a hurry, after watching the malevolent Sheriff of Nottingham walk off with Robin Hood: *Prince of Thieves*.

But you would never know from Brosnan's Bond that the odds are against him. Whether diving from aircraft, giving chase in a tank, or casually revealing the Bollinger chilling under the dashboard, he is absolutely unflappable — a pillar of the Empire, supposing we still had one. Bond has passed way beyond time and fashion. He now lives with Boadicea and King Arthur in the realm of British myth.

● *GoldenEye* opens in Britain next Friday, and will be reviewed in Thursday's paper

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DANGER RUNS DEEP

THEATRE: Jeremy Kingston finds *King Lear* and *Grannie* hard going

Jude Kelly's production of *King Lear*, down from Leeds, lasts only three hours and a quarter but seems much longer. The chief reason is the very poor acoustics. At the Hackney Empire, whenever characters shout, which Warren Mitchell's Lear and his daughters do a lot, the sound goes fuzzy. Trevor Baxter's Gloucester is another offender; so also is Robert Bowman's Edgar. The gist comes across fitfully but there is no pleasure in isolating the language from the flak.

Once the action moves to Dover, where quiet grief predominates over outrage, matters improve. Mitchell speaks the simple words that convey Lear's recognition of Cordelia with a feeling pathos: his acknowledgement of the blinded Gloucester too is done with a gruff and affecting tenderness. Yet these are only modest compensations in an evening that contains so many directorial oddities.

When Lear divides his kingdom in the opening scene, the relief map of Britain conveniently separates into three portions. In the instant that Alexandra Gilbreath's Regan is allotted her share, she turns her head to compare its size with the one remaining. The incident is over in a flash but is telling and precise.

Of less help is Kelly's innovative presentation of Edmund. Instead of the crafty

Several inches short of a king

villain we usually meet, Damien Goodwin stumbles in, trips over his suitcases, and is next seen in his bedroom trying to kill himself with a plastic bag pulled over his head. He is evidently a man driven into resentment by lack of parental love. But how does he then stride so easily towards evil? The parts do not hold together.

Regan and Goneril (Tricia Kelly) have also been skewed through lack of love. Lear's cossetting of Regan on his lap is clearly unwelcome, though it is still shocking to discover that she keeps her husband's corpse beneath her bed. Michael Cashman's prim Albany has evidently failed to give Goneril the passion that she longs for.

Mitchell's crotchety old fellow, in his bemuddled greatcoat and open sandals, is not a commanding figure on the heath, nor do we sense that the storm is the outward expression of inner turmoil. He can draw exquisite feeling from such quiet lines as "to deal plainly, I fear I am not in my perfect mind", spoken to Cathy Sara's gabbling Cordelia, but when the play's rich



Mitchell: crotchety but not a commanding figure

language is so scantily explored and relished the evening's rewards are low.

The image of a voraciously hungry old woman in *The Grannie* at the Wimbledon Attic, eating her family out of house, home and livelihood, eating them finally out of their lives, is an impressive metaphor for other kinds of tyranny, notably the political sort. But the field in which

she operates, namely her sorely tried descendants frantically trying to satisfy this cuckoo in their nest, needs to be far more alert and grimly comic than Roberto Cossa manages.

La Nona herself, the Appetite in Black, is certainly an arresting creation, and given a vivid presence by Richard Kane, bent double like a question mark, whimpering and simpering, jaws constantly on the move, and looking up at whoever is lading out the food with a sly, watchful stare, pathetic yet ruthless.

By contrast, the rest of the family is fatuously subservient to her demands. This may fit the metaphor of a populace helpless beneath implacable overlords but is ridiculous in the context of a working household. Shortcomings in the performances of Roger Watkins and Dominic Shaun as the two males do not help, and Jenny Lee's direction leaves gaps in the dialogue when nothing significant is silently happening either.

Grisly humour appears to be the play's intended tone. The older characters fall victims to stroke, heart-attack and poison in ways that make one smile a little, and the smile freezes when the young girl (decently played by Alexa Rosewood) is worked to death as a whore. Kane's final, ravenous roar provides a sinister climax but the evening is otherwise long and lumpy.

CONCERT

Poise on a string

LONDON is the centre of all things Hindemith this week, and is probably the viola capital too. There is a connection: Hindemith was not only one of the great composers of this century, but a leading viola soloist of his day.

While the centenary of his birth is being marked in the Royal Opera's highly-publicised new production of *Mathis der Maler*, no less vision was shown by the Wigmore Hall in opening its five-day International Hindemith Viola Festival on the eve of his birthday.

The festival's artistic director, the celebrated violinist Nobuko Imai, has gathered around her an impressive list of colleagues for this tribute, a line-up that will enable all seven of Hindemith's viola sonatas to be given. But his music is also being placed in context: Brahms's output for the instrument runs as a secondary thread

Viola Festival Wigmore Hall

through the concerts, and contemporary works feature prominently. There are daytime master-classes over the weekend.

Wednesday's opening concert, however, was an all-Hindemith affair. It began with the *Trauermusik* for viola and string orchestra, a short, eloquent work which the composer dispatched within a day as his response to the death of King George V. Imai and the strings of the Royal Northern College of Music Chamber Ensemble, conducted by Tadaaki Otaka, caught its dignity to perfection. Imai's tone is focused and forward — she seems incapable of a woolly note — and her projection vigorous, characteristics which apparently distinguished Hindemith's playing.

She was a musical soloist in *Der Schwanendreher*, the third of Hindemith's viola concertos. The piece is based on a set of German folk-songs and encompasses everything from haunting lullaby to chorale and oompah effects (brass and winds dominate the ensemble).

Hindemith's instrument features prominently in his orchestral writing, even in the advanced "exercises" from his Op 44 No 4 *Schulwerk*. The RNCM strings played with flexibility and intensity under Otaka's clear direction: Natsuko Yoshimoto was an impressive violin soloist in the neo-Baroque finale.

Instrumentation in the much later Octet, which rounded off the evening, was inspired by the combination Schubert used in his Octet, except that the violas are doubled instead of violins. Members of the London Sinfonietta gave it a virtuoso performance, undaunted by its bristling invention.

The festival continues until Sunday.

JOHN ALLISON

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Further particulars of the post and application forms may be obtained from the Senior Tutor, St Hugh's College, Oxford OX2 6LE, fax (01865) 274912; e-mail glenys.lee@st-hughes.oxford.ac.uk, to whom applications, including a full curriculum vitae and the names of three referees, should be returned by Wednesday 10 January 1996. Applicants should ask referees to write direct to the Senior Tutor by the same date.

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Candidates may currently be working in education, the Careers Service, local government or the private sector. Further information and application details can be obtained from the Leeds Training and Enterprise Council, Belgrave Hall, Belgrave Street, Leeds, LS2 8DD.
Telephone (0113) 234 7666

Closing date for applications: 08 December 1995
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UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
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For further particulars, please contact: The Registrar, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD. Applications (ten copies, or only one from overseas candidates), naming three referees, should be received not later than 8 January 1996. The University seeks to promote excellence in education and research, and is an equal opportunities employer.

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The Management Development Division of the Lancaster University Management School provides management education and development to the corporate sector. The Division has an annual turnover of £1.5m, and intends to continue to expand. The School now wishes to appoint a new Director for this Division. We seek an individual who is able to understand organisational requirements in management education, and can inspire and lead the staff of the School in this important area of work. We expect to recruit either a person with senior general management experience in a major organisation and with expertise in management development, or a senior professional in the management education sector.

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POSTS

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RESEARCH

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Main responsibilities in this post will relate to research and to the management of the educational activities of the Department.

Senior Lecturer in Horticulture (Post 2) (Reference: 95/41)

Candidates should possess an Honours Degree in Horticulture or allied discipline supported by relevant postgraduate qualifications and/or industrial experience in production or environmental horticulture.

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Application forms and further particulars for each of these posts may be obtained from the Personnel Unit, SAC Auchincruive, Ayr, KA6 5HW, (telephone 01292 520331) by quoting the relevant reference number.

Applications should be lodged by 22 November 1995.

SAC receives funding from the Scottish Office Agriculture and Fisheries Department.

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UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

E K Chambers Studentship in English Literature 1996

Applications are invited for the E K Chambers Studentship in English Literature (tenable at Oriel, at either Corpus Christi College or Somerville College, from October 1996) from those who wish either to undertake a graduate studies in English Literature or to read English as a second honour school. Candidates must have read Latin or Greek (or both) at university and be competent in both. They must have graduated by October 1996 from a university in the British Isles with an honours degree in a subject other than 'single honours' English. The Studentship is normally comparable in value to a British Academy Award.

Further particulars and application forms are available from Mrs J Thompson, Assistant to the Secretary to the Board of Management of the Chambers Bequest, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD (telephone (01865) 270202), to whom completed applications, accompanied by two pieces of written work on literary topics of not more than 2,000 words each, should be sent by Monday 15 January 1996.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES THE TIMES FORTHCOMING EDUCATION FEATURES

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For further information about these features or to advertise please contact Simon Mallinson: 0171 481 9994.

EDUCATION

David Charter looks at the courses which should broaden the appeal of the national curriculum

The shape of GCSEs to come

They can be long and thin, or short and fat. They have been heralded as the saviours of religious education but the curse of modern foreign languages. They are GCSE short courses and they are coming to a school near you next September.

The Government called GCSE short courses "your flexible friends" in January when it announced their introduction, but the courses seem destined to be referred to as "half GCSEs" by students and teachers as they start to catch on.

They are being offered in a range of subjects covering half the classroom time a full GCSE takes to deliver, but are graded to the same standards. The courses are primarily intended to be taken by 15 and 16-year-olds alongside their GCSEs. "Long and thin" short courses will be taken over two years in 5 per cent of curriculum time — roughly an hour a week — while "short and fat" courses will last for a year and take up 10 per cent of curriculum time, the same as full GCSEs.

They will be graded from A* to G and are likely to be counted towards a school's GCSE results table in the same way that AS levels count towards A-level tables. This gives schools one incentive to offer short courses. But is it really worth having half a GCSE?

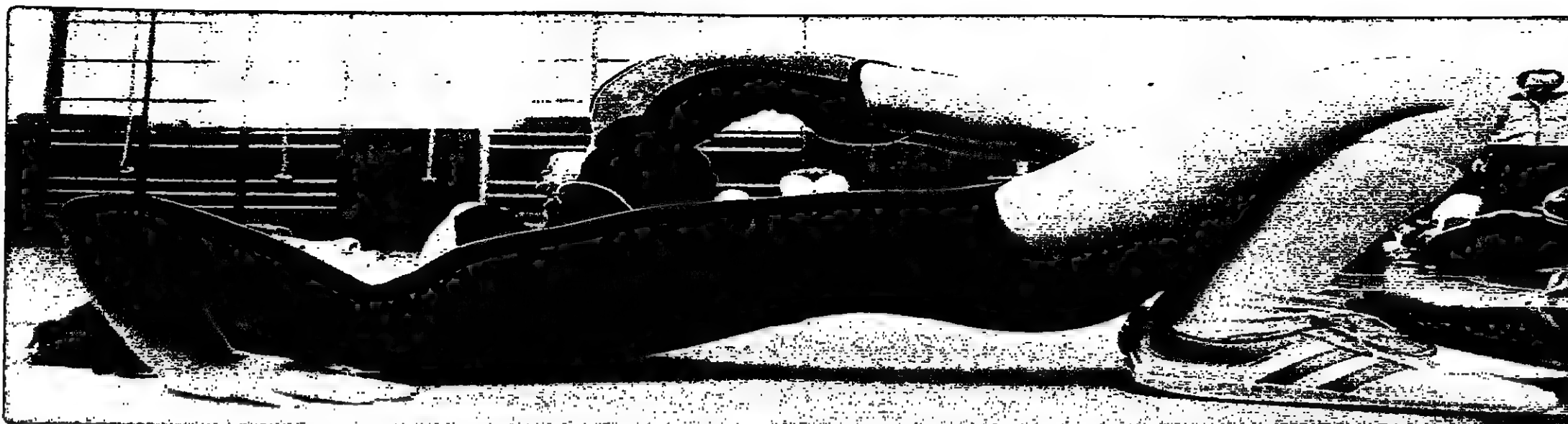
The religious education lobby is delighted at their introduction because it believes that they will encourage more youngsters to take RE seriously. At present, schools are required to devote 5 per cent of their learning week to RE, but the absence of a qualification has been blamed for lack of motivation from pupils and teachers. Ofsted, the school inspection agency, has found the requirements for RE are not being met in three-quarters of schools.

Lat Blaylock, executive officer of the Professional Council for RE, which represents RE teachers, says: "Ofsted has shown that there is inadequate time for RE in many schools. It has always been a Cinderella subject — students have always done it but they have not got anything for it. We think the short course will enable schools to put RE on a firmer footing."

Mr Blaylock's only concern is that the introduction of "half GCSEs" may be hampered by the shortage of RE teachers recently recognised by the Teacher Training Agency.

Religious education is likely to be a main beneficiary of the extra room being made for short courses in the revised national curriculum, which, greatly slimmed, will be introduced in September. The 20 per cent of "free time" created on the timetable has been at the expense of arts and humanities subjects such as history, geography and modern foreign languages.

The Government hopes that



The long and short of it: a "half GCSE" in PE is likely to be offered as a two-years "long thin" option while design and technology may prove to be a more suitable subject for the "short fat" one-year shape



short courses will mean schools can fit in more of these subjects at GCSE level. "Half GCSEs" will be offered in popular foreign languages — French, Spanish, German and Italian — as well as design and technology, information technology, RE, art, geography, history, music and PE.

Foreign language specialists are not looking forward to them. John Fergusson, spokesman for the Association for Language Learning (ALL), which represents language teachers and advisers, fears short courses will become a dumping ground for unpromising students.

"We do not like short courses at all," Mr Fergusson says. "We do not think they offer sufficient substance for students to achieve meaningful levels of competence in the language. We suspect that they offer an easy way out for some

schools which have a fairly strong policy of streaming children according to their ability."

The single hour a week spent on a "long thin" short course would not be enough for immersion in a foreign language, he says. Language teachers are worried that the "short fat" option will mean many students give up foreign languages at 15, after a short course exam. Most continental 15 and 16-year-

olds start their foreign language training earlier and spend three to four hours a week on it. The range of short courses being prepared by the exam boards was increased this summer after arguments from the Secondary Heads Association (SHA) and others that a limited range would be impossible to timetable.

If there was only one block in the timetable for short courses, it might well be that students were already doing all the subjects on offer at full GCSE. If technology was the only short course most pupils could take, schools with limited technology rooms would find it impossible to organise.

John Dunford, president of the SHA, says: "Now we have more short courses it is possible to timetable, but my view is that schools will go into them very cautiously. Schools may at first be put off by the uncertainty. Imagine a youngster saying 'I've got eight-and-a-half GCSEs'. What will that mean to an employer? The acceptability of it in the world outside, as with all new qualifications, is a problem. And the possibility for progression is not clear."

The impact of previous curriculum promises also makes schools wary of short courses. Although they are supposed to take up 5 per cent of teaching time, experience suggests more may be necessary.

Mr Dunford says: "The GCSE short course may well reflect the problems of the AS level. AS was supposed to be half an A level, but

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

length of time spent on compulsory foreign language study for a 15-year-old is: Belgium 4-6 hours a week (2 languages compulsory). Denmark 4 hours-plus (2). Ireland 3 hours (Irish compulsory). France 3 hours-plus. Germany 4-5 hours. Greece 3 hours. Holland 6 hours (2). Italy 3-4 hours. Luxembourg 4-6 hours (2). Portugal 3-4 hours. Spain 240 hours/year

SOURCE: EURYLIVE

turned out to be harder. While it required half the content, youngsters had to obtain all the skills needed to get to A-level standard. However, he said head teachers welcomed any extra flexibility, and short courses would help to offer a broad and balanced curriculum up to 16. "The inclusion of history, geography, art and music enables children to study arts and humanities at a time when they were threatened to become squeezed out of the curriculum."

'We suspect that they offer an easy way out for some schools'

Ten months before their introduction, and at a time when schools are already planning for September, questions remain unanswered about the half GCSE.

The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA), which is overseeing their introduction, does not yet know whether the history and geography short-course syllabuses, for example, will enable an enthusiastic student to switch seamlessly to the full GCSE.

To an extent this will depend on the exam boards chosen by the school and whether the school's own timetabling allows it.

If students are progressing very well at their "short fat" course, SCAA advises that they could abandon the summer exam, join the full GCSE class, and work towards the substantive qualification.

SCAA also says a "short fat" design and technology course in, say, textiles, could be followed the next year by another D&T short course, in food or graphics. But even if both are passed at grade A, they will not be allowed to be counted as a full GCSE. Two halves will not make a whole.

This may mean the Government's "flexible friend" will prove too inflexible in some subjects for schools to offer. Mr Dunford sees the short course as a piecemeal step towards a radical rethink of qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds. This is what the SHA and others are seeking from the report next Easter on the review of post-16 qualifications being undertaken by Sir Ron Dearing, the Government's Chief Curriculum Adviser.

Mr Dunford says: "We would like to see youngsters able to embark at 14 on history and proceed to A level, acquiring modules as they go, and at any time say 'I have done enough' and go into a different pathway."

"That requires a different structure based on flexible short courses and modules."

£10m subsidy plan to spread the net wider

More than 2,000 schools have joined the Internet since last year, but few have gone to the expense of joining the real information superhighway. Broadband networks, carrying video and interactive services, with text and pictures, are seen as a luxury.

This week, however, the Government has begun to open the door with a £10 million programme of pilot projects to test the educational potential of the new technologies. The announcement of the initiative also enabled ministers to strike back over Labour's "deal" with British Telecom to wire up all schools.

Schools will be offered a multimillion-pound subsidy to give children access to the superhighways. But the money will come from other users and operators of the electronic networks, rather than the Government.

An outline of the plans began to emerge as Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, demonstrated his own enthusiasm for the venture at a conference in Cambridge. "Today's IT-literate children will be tomorrow's business leaders — the full-fledged information society — will be integral to everyday life, as familiar as the telephone or television."

The variety in the 23 programmes shows the scope for innovation. They range from a network giving able children in small rural schools in Scotland extra tuition in mathematics, technology and language, to one giving medical students online access to operating theatres.

Among the other experiments chosen from 120 bids

John O'Leary reports on pilot schemes to test the value of IT

are a project in the Cambridge area providing homework and revision material on line, and another linking a secondary school and ten primary schools in Bristol to provide specialist courses. There is even a link between Salford University and two local schools which will use the university's equipment and European contacts to give pupils direct contact with French-speakers.

Mr Heseltine reopened the row over Labour's "deal" with BT to wire up every school. He said either the promise was worthless because the capability existed already, or Labour had been "conned" into signing away competition guarantees given to cable operators.



John Edwards, of Nynex, which has helped to develop a CD-Rom library to which schools will have remote access

The Government plans to look beyond mere connections to the superhighways but a report on six months of consultation on the educational potential of the new technology makes it clear that schools will have to rely on industry to keep the costs down.

Ofsted, the communications watchdog, will publish proposals next month for a "universal service fund" to give schools cheap connections, preferential tariffs and some equipment. The costs of the scheme would be recouped through higher charges for other users and contributions from operators.

Don Cruickshank, the head of Ofsted, told the conference on educational superhighways the scale of subsidy remained open. But the cost of providing each school with a notional £5,000-a-year standard business tariff for £1,000 would be £30 million. Mr Heseltine said there had been huge commercial interest in offering services for education.

Vouchers are another poll tax in the making

The debate about education vouchers has surfaced once again, this time in the Queen's Speech. Despite the swathe of criticism that greeted plans for nursery vouchers, they have been retained in the Government's legislative programme.

Ministers may dismiss some criticism as knee-jerk reaction, but caveats are inevitable because of the flaws inherent in a voucher system. Few local education authorities have been willing to volunteer for the pilot, and even the Secretary of State is said to be sceptical about the scheme, apparently pushed on her by Downing Street.

The attractions are clear, in theory at least. Expansion of pre-school places should be demanded, with flexibility for parents to choose places in the private, LEA or voluntary sectors.

Parents should be happy, and Conservative MPs may hope to reap the rewards in the ballot box. But like any market system, as well as winners there will be losers, and losing is a bit tough when you are only four.

Ministers should ask themselves whether the advantages of the voucher scheme could not have been delivered another way. Could not the same flexibility have been achieved by requiring local authorities to ensure enough places are available in the state and voluntary sectors to satisfy parental demand?

As well as expanding their own pre-school provision, education authorities could, through training and grants for improvements to buildings and equipment, have boosted the voluntary sector, too.

As it is, the problems with

Simple in theory, disastrous in practice, argues Nigel de Gruchy

the voucher scheme seem likely to outweigh the benefits. With insufficient start-up funds, there may be difficulty in ensuring that the supply of places meets the demand, especially since proposals for the curriculum to be delivered in nurseries will require qualified nursery teachers. Will the



money be there to train and pay them?

The scheme makes no allowances for the current inequitable provision, with most four-year-olds in some areas in nurseries and virtually none at all in others. Even when parents do find a place, they may discover that the voucher is not enough to pay for it.

Administration costs should be watched carefully, too. The complexities of the system seem enormous. Money will go from the Government to a private company, which will

then issue vouchers to parents, who will then spend them either in LEA, voluntary or private nurseries, which then return them to the agency and back to the Government.

Other bureaucratic difficulties will arise if the voucher has to be split, for example if a child moves from a playgroup to nursery, or with rising fees entering primary school. Far from delivering high-quality pre-school places to all, vouchers look like being a subsidy to the rich and of limited benefit to the poor.

If the nursery voucher scheme goes ahead, there are fears that primary and secondary schooling will come next. Gillian Shepherd may deny it, but will her reassurances hold good if the Prime Minister and his policy advisers want to go ahead?

Reports that the Government has been considering vouchers for 16 to 19-year-olds have been strengthened by a leaked memo from the Chancellor urging a system of "learning credits". After all, if vouchers are considered so good for nursery education, why not for the rest?

Vouchers would also be the last nail in the coffin of sensible admissions policies. Parents are horrified by the vagaries and chaos of admissions in many areas today: a voucher scheme would create even more confusion.

Just like the poll tax, it is a policy that seems simple in theory but may prove disastrous in practice. At least with the nursery voucher scheme, there is a trial period. If the Government wants to improve its ratings on education, it will do well to proceed with caution.

□ Nigel de Gruchy is general secretary of the NASUWT



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THESE ARE THE NUMBERS TO SCRATCH OFF GAME C ON YOUR TIMES CARD

152 157

HOW TO CLAIM

If you reveal all the letters of any word from Game C of your Scrabble gamecard, claim your prize by calling the Scrabble hotline on 0171-867 0406 today, between 9.30am and 3pm. Have your gamecard with you when you claim. Late claims will not be accepted.

Proud Wainwright meets his destiny

BY MARK SOUSTER

IF EVER a man was destined to lead his country, it was Robert Iain Wainwright. His credentials are impeccable: an army doctor with the rank, appropriately, of captain; one of Scotland's few world-class rugby players; and one with the respect of the troops he leads out at Murrayfield for the first time tomorrow, against Western Samoa.

His deeds of derring-do three weeks ago, when he ran off the pitch during a league game to help to resuscitate a spectator, only served to catapult him into the limelight. It is a position with which he is not happy, but he accepts that it goes with the job.

That job, as Scotland captain, was confirmed two weeks ago to widespread approval. Since the World Cup, he had played down the speculation surrounding himself and the captaincy. It would be an honour, he had said, a statement he repeated when he was finally named as Gavin Hastings's successor. On the surface, he is a modest man of few words and easy to underestimate. A man of iron will and military bearing, Wainwright, 30, leads by example. He will be a demanding

captain and any player who does not commit himself to Wainwright's aim of ensuring Scotland's place in the top six in the world will incur his displeasure. His ability is such that he could play anywhere in the back row, but it is at blind side that he has settled. A latecomer to international rugby — he did not make his debut until 1992 — Wainwright has only 16 caps.

Wainwright is a product of Glenalmond School, the Alma Mater of David Leslie, David Sole and Iain Morrison before him, and Cambridge University. He would appear to fit the stereotypical image of an es-

tablishment figure; but not so. He is conservative with a small "c" and, above all, a realist who accepts the inevitability of professionalism, even if he may not be comfortable with its repercussions.

This season he has represented the international squad in contract negotiations with the Scottish Rugby Union. In return for financial reward, he expects players to make greater sacrifices. A fierce patriot, but not a nationalist, his motivation is not money but the honour and pride of representing his country.

Scotland have made a late change to their replacements. Graham Ellis, the Currie hooker, has had to withdraw after injuring his left arm during practice on Thursday. His place goes to Steve Brotherton, of Melrose.



Wainwright: iron will

Second encounter can double the drama

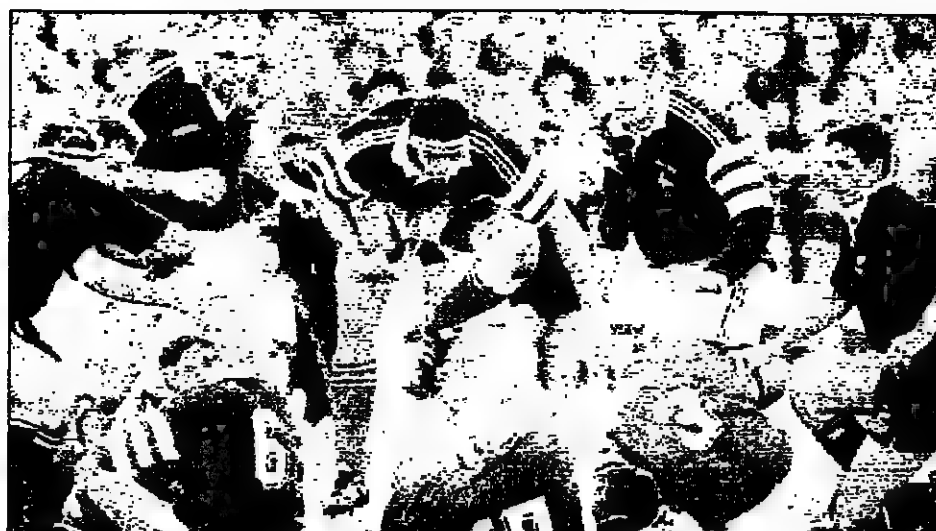
After victory for France last week, Gerald Davies is glad that New Zealand get to try again tomorrow

Last Saturday, France won the first Test against New Zealand in Toulouse. Both teams now travel north to Paris for the second match tomorrow. It is an exciting prospect.

There are, admittedly, tasty morsels on offer even closer to home this weekend, but the real feast must surely be that found in Parc des Princes. A one-off rugby international match is fine and serves the immediate purpose of instant gratification. But I believe that a series is better.

A series can allow for continuity and progress, for the accumulation of evidence of superiority; or otherwise. It gives the second chance when perhaps, in the first game, an element of luck, of good or ill, might have intruded influentially. A successful team, carried on a tide of passionate intensity for the first encounter, is, without the rematch, left hanging in the air, the players wondering whether they would have been capable of repeating the performance or not.

On the basis that the league can be more a test of resources and of consistent resourcefulness than a cup competition — though, admittedly, each has its unique and different character — so a series of matches brings into play versatility and tactical dexterity. There are ebbs and flows in much the same way that the five nations' championship, al-



Benazzi was a driving force behind the French triumph in Toulouse last Saturday

though again of a different flavour, is accumulatively intriguing.

Two matches are more likely to provide a better and more rounded assessment of the sides involved. How much more fascinating, for instance, would it be were Wales to have another international against Fiji this weekend. What might it have proved?

That Fiji, recovering their panache, which has so long remained dormant, are a re-

surgent rugby nation? Or that Wales are in better fettle than they proved last Saturday? For the moment, we do not know.

In the wider context, a third match might be better still, especially if the spoils have been shared in the first two. This occurred in the last two British Isles tours where, having drawn level after the second international, the touring team won the decisive third meeting in Australia in

1989, but lost in New Zealand in 1993.

When four games were played in 1983, the series had long been settled beforehand and the last match, played at Auckland, was a thoroughly spirited affair and the Lions, lacking motivation, lost by a record score of 38-6.

Yet the four matches that incoming touring teams once played in Great Britain and Ireland inspired an escalating tension which has dissipated

somewhat since the fixtures have been halved.

A week may very well be a long time in politics but it can appear a mere nanosecond in the world of sport. A moment of triumph can be transformed, with the taste of success barely off the lips, into a loss; or, conversely, the desolation of the lonely dressing-room of failure can be replaced almost immediately by the journey to the victor's rostrum. The surprise reversal is one of sport's eternal joys.

Come the dawn and the minder's reminders are constant companions to the player: you are only as good as your last game; the next game, whoever it is against, is always the hardest. In the wink of an eye, the international soon comes around and the prospect intensifies: can the team do it again?

With France successful against the odds last Saturday, this is the gripping question that arises in Parc des Princes tomorrow. The contest brings back to mind the events of 1986. The roles, however, have been reversed.

In November of that year, it was New Zealand who won the first encounter in Toulouse, but by the time they travelled to Paris, the French had found a new resolve and perseverance and won. Who has the stiffer sinews tomorrow, and might we not by the evening wish that the third game might be played?

SPORTS LETTERS

A month too far for rugby

From Mr Geoffrey Tolson

Sir, For some years now the rugby union and football authorities have allowed their seasons to continue into May when, by rights, these should finish at the end of April.

Now we have the astonishing news (report, November 9) that the Rugby Football Union (RFU) is seriously advocating playing the five nations' championship in May, which is a month when cricket and other summer games take place. So, for one thing, it would be unfair to county cricket clubs and their supporters if they had to compete with the counter-attraction of rugby football internationals. In any case, winter games have a longer season than summer ones, and it is surely the RFU's own fault if its season is bursting at the seams.

I would suggest that the structure of the Courage league remains as it is, but that we return to having home or away fixtures, not home and away ones, similar to cricket. If a change is really desired, the five nations' championship could take place in March or April, but not in May.

It is a pity that rugby union appears to be modelling itself on football: it would be better if it followed the example of county cricket which, although wholly professional, manages without transfer fees and in every respect has retained its ethos.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY TOLSON,
Hunters Lodge,
Stony Lane, Holwell,
Sherborne, Dorset.

From Mr J. T. Campbell

Sir, What is more British than to spend wet winter Saturdays, while young men rush muddily about cold fields, sitting warmly indoors seeing our view of the selectors confirmed and inveighing against the tactics of our stand-off half?

Now it is suggested that the home internationals may be moved to May. How shall we last the winter without fortnightly proof of folly at the highest level and the demonstration that things are not what they were?

Yours sincerely,
J. T. CAMPBELL,
104 Hadham Road,
Bishop's Stortford,
Hertfordshire.

Domestic fouls

From Mr M. Rees

Sir, Mr Laurence Kingsley's view that the "real reason for English football's failure in the international arena is that for 30 years technical skills have been totally ignored at the expense of speed and fitness" (Sports Letters, November 10), does not explain why sides that are not equipped for European football are nevertheless highly successful in the domestic game.

For success in the domestic game clubs use players who are prepared to foul heavily and so deter skilled opponents. Internationally, such behaviour is less tolerated, and in any case its discouraging effect is less likely to succeed in important matches.

As the English national side generously employs players of this type, it appears that there is no real will on the part of the FA to prevent dangerous, dirty play. In the unlikely event of a change of heart, I suggest:

1. The collection of statistics about players who cause serious injury. These should be kept over the whole of players' careers.
2. Video reviews after matches to locate deliberate dangerous play on and off the ball.
3. Long suspensions, perhaps for life in some cases, of players who are the most egregious offenders.
4. Recognition that nearly all fouls are intentional.

Yours faithfully,
MALCOLM REES,
109 High Street,
Amersham, Buckinghamshire.

Village voice

From Mr H. W. Dean

Sir, Perhaps an all-purpose national stadium, whose need was questioned by Mr John Gage (November 10), is the wrong objective for England. Wembley's strongest selling point may indeed be that the UK will not be chosen for a future Olympics if the national stadium is outside London. However, on this basis, its bid must include proposals for a future Olympic village, together with provisional planning permission and support from the local authorities at the chosen sites for construction. The sites will, of course, have to remain available for the indefinite period until a UK Olympic bid is successful.

To choose Wembley as the site for the national stadium on "Olympic" grounds, only to find that the future provision of accommodation for the competitors proved to be impossible due to failure to plan ahead, would be unfair to the competing bid from Manchester and, even perhaps, to the other bidders who were recently eliminated.

Yours faithfully,
H. W. DEAN,
3 Claremont Court,
Rose Hill, Dorking, Surrey.

Lessons unlearned

From Mr Gary Evans

Sir, In May last year Ayrton Sena and Roland Ratzenberger died at Imola, venue for the San Marino Grand Prix.

Last week I watched with horror and dismay the accident that befell Mika Hakkinen in qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide. Clearly, not enough has been learnt or done.

How can it be that the fastest corner on the circuit has but one row of tyres in front of the concrete retaining wall on its exit? Instead of the McLaren hitting numerous rows of energy-absorbing tyres, it went straight through the token gesture and came to rest violently against the concrete, seriously injuring the driver.

I find it sickening. Yours faithfully,
GARY EVANS,
Church End,
Hockliffe,
Bedfordshire.

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Deposit (%)	10%	10%	10%
Deposit (£)	£943	£1,467	£1,379
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Total Credit Price	£11,415.92	£17,261.64	£16,666.32
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Small is beautiful for Large Action

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

AFTER a brief chasing career, Large Action returns full time to hurdling at Ascot today having schooled in brilliant style over the smaller obstacles at Lambourn yesterday.

"He schooled super and looked at us as though to say 'Thank God you are putting me back to this and not me back to go chasing anymore,'" Oliver Sherwood, trainer of last season's Champion Hurdle runner-up, said.

Large Action made a winning debut over fences at Uttoxeter two weeks ago, but looked a far from natural chaser so Sherwood and the connections of the seven-year-old decided to switch him back to hurdling. "I don't think he will go over fences again," Sherwood said.

The Coopers & Lybrand Ascot Hurdle, over 2½ miles, looks an ideal reintroduction for Large Action as the race conditions enable him to receive weight from Atours and



ONE BETTING
40 40

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: LARGE ACTION
(2.40 Ascot)
Next best: Martin's Lamp
(3.10 Ascot)

Putty Road, the Sun Alliance Hurdle winner.

"The race is perfect for him and he's in tremendous form," Sherwood enthused. "If he wins tomorrow, he'll go straight for the Bula Hurdle at Cheltenham. We will then find something for him over Christmas before mapping out a plan leading up to the Cheltenham Festival — and hope it is third time lucky."

The Lambourn trainer added: "He's never won over hurdles going right-handed and I think he is a better horse going the other way, but what would worry me more, with only five other runners, is the possible lack of pace. We don't want a false-run race so if we have to make the running we will."

Sherwood was speaking at Warwick yesterday after Zephyrus had justified 11-8 favouritism to land the second division of the Ashorne Novices' Hurdle and become the Upper Lambourn trainer's first winner for Bill and Shirley Robins. The winner of a

bumper race last year when trained by David Nicholson, the five-year-old had shown precious little at home but was a different proposition on the racecourse, and looks sure to win more races, particularly when stepped up in trip.

Jim McGrath and Reg Griffin from *Timeform*, the Hali-

fax-based racing analysts, are enjoying a rich vein of success with horses trained at Malton by Peter Easterby and Toogood To Be True continue the trend when he won the Willsford Handicap Chase.

Toogood To Be True, who has now won 11 of his 26 starts, was the twentieth winner

trained by Easterby for the pair of racing experts during the past three years, and it will be no surprise if the seven-year-old enjoys further success now that he has moved up to beyond three miles.

His jumping is still not particularly fluent, but he possesses the most important

attribute — the will to win — and, after leading approaching the second last, he battled on in determined style to thwart Andrelet.

The same quality applies to Adrian Maguire, who came in for fulsome praise from Tim Forster after he gave Class Of Ninetytwo an inspired ride to

Jockeys have Taunton appeal rejected

By JULIAN MUSCAT

FIVE of the six jockeys to contest the seven-day ban imposed for their going the wrong side of a blocked-off hurdle in a race at Taunton last week had their appeals rejected in London yesterday.

The Jockey Club's disciplinary committee upheld the ruling of the stewards at Taunton, where an injured jockey was receiving attention after a fall on the first circuit of the Orchard Portman Selling Handicap Hurdle.

The six jockeys were all disqualified

and the race awarded to Safe Secret, originally fifth to pass the winning post. Tony McCoy, Mick Fitzgerald, Mark Richards, Tom Dwyer and Guy Lewis are to miss out on some lucrative opportunities, among them the First National Bank Gold Cup and the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup. Emily Jones was alone among the errant sextet not to contest the seven-day suspension, which takes effect from tomorrow.

Each of the appellants can consider themselves fortunate to have been refunded their £240 deposit. Although their

taking the wrong course resulted from a split-second decision, the safety of several individuals was seriously compromised as runners, led by Lewis aboard Tony's Mist, headed in their direction.

Tests taken on the Mark Johnston-trained Double Trigger, who disappointed when favourite for the Melbourne Cup last week, have revealed no prohibited substances. There had been an irregularity reported in his pre-race blood test, but it was found to be caused by a metabolite of a substance which was found in analysis of his feed.

Martin's Lamp to glow

ASCOT

BBC2

2.40: Oliver Sherwood is wasting no time returning Large Action to the smaller obstacles after a less than convincing debut over fences at Uttoxeter two weeks ago.

Runner-up to Alderbrook in last season's Champion Hurdle, this talented performer has about a stone in hand over most of his rivals and should win, although the seven-year-old has never won over hurdles on a right-handed course and is considered to be better travelling anti-clockwise.

Putty Road, winner of the Sun Alliance Novices' Hurdle last term, is not well treated by the race conditions and Atours was far from foot perfect when collecting at Wincanton. If there is an upset it could be provided by the temperamental but talented Oh So Risky.



TODAY'S RACES
ON TELEVISION

3.10: Plenty of pace here with the front-running Kibreet and Gales Cavalier, which should make this a true test. Kibreet impressed when winning at Chesham but the Philip Hobbs-trained eight-year-old may struggle in this better class, and his regular rider, Adrian Maguire, is required for Martin's Lamp.

An impressive winner first time out last season, the David Nicholson-trained chaser then suffered a back problem but ran a commend-

able race behind Morceli at Aintree and looks a well-handicapped horse. Wonder Man, now with Nick Henderson, won a match at Cheltenham last Friday, but will find this tougher under top weight.

3.40: Silver Groom, winner of a valuable handicap on the Flat at Goodwood, in the summer, is still not the most natural hurdler but his success at Sandown 13 days ago showed Reg Akhurst's five-year-old is improving over obstacles.

Travelling strongly throughout the race, he made a mistake at the last before quickening away from his rivals and still looks a step ahead of the handicapper. Any further rain would enhance the chances of the mud-loving Amancio, from Guy Harwood's yard, and Kingsfold Pet.

RICHARD EVANS

AINTREE

THUNDERER

1.15 Kalesaid, 1.50 Frontier Flight, 2.20 Clay County, 2.50 Rosina Mae, 3.20 Spanish Light, 3.50 Rachael's Dawn.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM

SIS

1.15

LETHS EVENTS AND PARTIES NOVICES

HURDLE (22.749; 3m 110yd) (4 runners)

1. 5122 KALASAD 7 (9) M J Doyle 4-11.5... G Carter (2) 56

2. 5123 KALASAD 7 (9) M J Doyle 4-11.5... G Carter (2) 56

3. 5124 KALASAD 7 (9) M J Doyle 4-11.5... G Carter (2) 56

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36. 5157 KALASAD 7 (9) M J Doyle 4-11.5... G Carter (2) 56

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How to show the colour of your money

In the years ahead, when it will be commonplace for large fields to contest valuable horse races in front of capacity crowds at Folkestone, Ludlow, Haydock et al, there will be those who recall the hard times: the early and mid-1990s, when things were less than wonderful with the sport of kings.

Then, too few beasts of quality chased inadequate prize-money on unsuitable going in front of minimal audiences... so there was a wailing and a whingeing which was piteous to behold.

And it may well be that when historians look back to determine the single event that made it all better, next Tuesday, November 21, 1995, will be deemed to have been the day of the turnaround and become to horse racing as the Fourth of July is to Americans, Bastille Day to French Republicans. The approach road to Kempton Park shall be renamed November 21st Avenue, and when a child asks his father the reason, he will be told that this was the day of salvation: when men in suits set up the machinery that brought lasting prosperity to the sport.

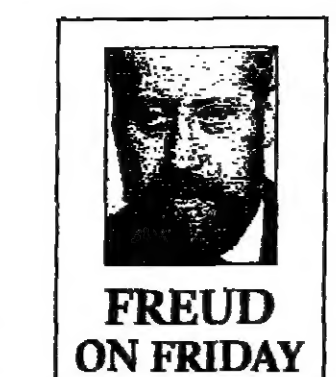
In 1994, the British Horseracing Board (BHB) was vested by Parliament with the job of ensuring the well-being and prosperity of racing, considered too important to be left to the inbred, self-perpetuating captains of industry who ran the Jockey Club. Inevitably there were those who argued against mending an organisation that was not broke...

but after less than two years we have Sunday racing, late opening of betting shops, the rationalisation of VAT on bloodstock sales and diminution of betting duty. The world watched and nodded and said: "What else?"

And so it came to pass that Weatherbys, the excellent secretariat of the BHB, announced The First Auction of Cherished Colours, profits to benefit racing.

The doubters asked: Will this not make racing more elitist? On the contrary, said the men in suits. People who have racing colours need not have racchours; nothing elitist about that.

Like having a television aerial and no television set? Well, yes. Let us examine the history of racing colours. In 1762, the second order agreed by the newly-formed Jockey Club decreed that: "For the greater convenience of distinguishing horses in running, jockeys shall wear their owners' colours, which colours are to be registered." It was a qualified success. By 1811, the *Racing Calendar* listed 64 entries. 30 years later the number had risen to 200, and in



the early 1970s, which saw the publication of the comprehensive *Book of Colours*, the total was 9,000. Weatherbys now receives an annual fee for their registration and to ensure that no two colours are alike. All colours were acceptable: though if an owner wanted to register, say, all green, he would be told green has gone. All the greens?

Yes. Pale green, dark green, light, emerald, pea, sea, myrtle, rifle, Irish, almond, Lincoln, moss, olive, grass,

apple, sage, also bottle, leaf and British Racing.

Can I have a mixture? Light green jacket, dark green cap. "Gone."

But with jackets having epaulettes, stripes, stars, diamonds, braces, diabolos, squares, triangles, crosses of Loren, Stars of David, chevrons and other designs, and different patterns on sleeves and caps, everyone was accommodated — even if some colours looked like distress signals.

Nearly 1,000 new colours are registered annually; a similar number are discontinued, so the authorities rationalised pigments: three greens, a black and a white and a couple each of brown, blue, red, yellow; also pink, orange, purple and fawn... though anyone who had patchwork or gold tassels on ermine velvet could hold onto them provided that the annual due was paid or a life subscription was taken out, as by my friend, Peter O'Sullivan, who bought his "forever for a guinea" in 1940.

November 21 will change all that with a first auction of cherished colours: colours that will stamp you as with-it, well-heeled, well-read —



Racing colours going under orders: aquamarine, cerise, gold, khaki, lime green, silver and terracotta

Road rage the spur for McRae

Andrew Longmore on the anger simmering between team-mates in rally build-up

If the starter were to cry "seconds out" instead of counting down the seconds to the RAC Rally, which begins in Chester on Sunday, it would be entirely in keeping with the confrontational nature of the event this year.

Going into the final round of a fraught season, Colin McRae, of Scotland, and Carlos Sainz, of Spain, both driving for the Subaru team, stand level on points at the head of the world championship. But, as if a world title was not high stakes enough, a spectacular falling out between the drivers on the final day of the Rally of Catalunya three weeks ago has made the duel highly personal.

A clear-the-air chat between the pair last week was only partially successful. Mistrust lingers after McRae had disobeyed team orders on the final stages of the rally and taken the lead from Sainz, only to check in purposely late for

the final time control, handing the rally back to the Spaniard. Only belated pleading by his father, Jimmy, a former rally driver, persuaded McRae to forfeit victory, but the gesture smacked of insult, ridicule and condescension, in Sainz's backyard. "There is still friction between us," McRae said. "We have talked about it, but it's still there. The sadness is that we had been very good friends until then."

What angered Sainz most was not McRae's disobedience but his duplicity. McRae had said that he would be accepting the team orders earlier in the day, and then ignored them. "I understand his position, but I didn't understand his attitude," Sainz said. "It looked as if he gave me the rally and that is not fair, not honourable, not correct to a friend. If he had told us before he was going for the win, then fine, it would have been a fair fight. It has created bad feelings."

So angry was McRae that he shot past Nigel Riddle, the technical manager, who had



McRae's thoughts are firmly fixed on his showdown with Sainz in the RAC Rally, which starts on Sunday

been dispatched to the final stage to enforce the team's wishes. Even now, the Scotsman cannot see why he had to sacrifice his own claim to the drivers' crown to protect Sainz and Subaru's interests in the manufacturers' title. "It was crazy to have team orders," he said. "What I regret is that I wasn't truthful with Carlos, but I was fairly well mixed up. I had never been in that situation before and I didn't know what to do."

Anyone who has followed the inexorable rise of the Lanarkshire prodigy from the exuberant and erratic "McCrash" to the verge of a place in history as the first British rally world champion would know that deliberately losing a race is no more part of McRae's make-up than verbosity or patience.

For all the recent evidence of maturity in his driving, the core of McRae is all racer. Like Nigel Mansell, he is always looking for someone to overtake. It is no surprise, for example, to find that his idea of relaxation includes extreme skiing and trail biking. Rather more difficult to absorb is the idea of the shy, still schoolboyish, McRae rubbing shoulders with the Formula One and tennis jet set as a resident of Monte Carlo.

David Richards, the Subaru team manager, who bore the brunt of McRae's anger in Spain, puts his man in equally exclusive company on the talent scale. "He is like Schumacher in terms of natural ability," he said. Richards believes not only that McRae is as instinctively quick as Ari Vatanen, with whom he won the world championship in 1981, Henri Toivonen and Markku Alen, but also that, at 27, he is capable of outstripping them with a little less dash and a touch more cunning.

The memories of Catalunya still large, Richards said: "He still has a lot to learn on the mental side, but he has very good concentration and his approach has become more relaxed. He knows he is regarded as a serious competitor and that has lifted his level of self-confidence."

Nobody has watched the maturing process closer than Derek Ringer, McRae's cool and faithful co-driver. In the early days, when the flying

Scot was heading for derailment, few would have swapped seats, but victory in New Zealand for the past three years, and in the RAC Rally last year, the first by a British driver for 18 years, has encouraged a sense of belonging.

"It's no different from any other athlete," Ringer said. "Once you've made the jump and been accepted at the highest level, things look a lot simpler. Colin has always looked very spectacular from the outside, but inside, there has always been a great feeling of control. Just occasionally he overstepped the limit a bit, but that happens less now."

McRae's plan for the four-day RAC Rally, though, has a refreshingly familiar ring to it. "If Carlos gets his mind right and starts well, he will be very difficult to beat," he said. "But if I can get the jump on him I think I'll be able to hang on."

In other words, put your foot down and keep it there. McRae is driving on stages he knows well, in front of his home crowd. Mercifully, the Subaru team have said that there will be no team orders this time. "A fight to the finish," McRae said.

Hussain sets mind on victory

FROM PAT GIBSON IN MULTAN, PAKISTAN

NASSER HUSSAIN, or "Nazir" as they call him in these parts, is applying his own kind of Eastern philosophy to the challenge of becoming the first England cricket captain to win a "Test" match in Pakistan for 34 years.

Since it is between the A teams, the five-day game that starts here today is not really a Test match at all, but England are treating it as though it is, as they tackle the problems that have confounded every touring side since Ted Dexter's team won the first series in 1961-62.

Hussain's answer smacks more of Essex than the Orient. He may have been born in Madras but he learnt his cricket at Chelmsford and he wants his side to go into the match showing the same relaxed attitude that has brought them victory in each of their first five games.

"It is a big game, particularly for me as captain," he said. "But there will be enough pressure out there anyway and the worst thing we can do is to go into the match full of tension and freeze the moment their spinners come on. The atmosphere can get to you, yet back home I would back our batsmen to get runs against these bowlers every time. I want us to be positive and try to stamp our authority on the game."

It is an admirable approach but it is not going to be easy to put theory into practice in the heat and dust of this rearing Punjab city against a Pakistan A team which will be far more competitive than any of the sides they have beaten.

It will be led by Asif Mujtaba, who played in all five Tests in England in 1992 and who is determined to force his way back into the senior

side in time for the World Cup, and will include other players with similar ambitions. Yet Hussain believes that England will win if they can score enough runs, which is why they will probably include Dominic Ostler to bolster the middle-order batting at the expense of their fastest bowler, Ed Giddings, on what looks like being a fairly low and slow pitch.

Arif Ali Abbasi, the chief executive of the Pakistan Cricket Board, who wants to recruit an umpire and a coach from England to improve his country's standing in the game, has been the target of a demonstration by a group of former players, including Abdul Qadir, the legendary leg spinner. Donkeys carried an effigy of Abbasi in Lahore, where the board has its headquarters, in protest at the "wrong policies" of officials.

Well-stocked shop window

London Jazz Festival. Radio 3, 7.30pm.

Barbara Thompson, jazz composer, arranger and instrumentalist (alto, tenor, and soprano sax), is given a shop window which is just big enough to accommodate her talents in the way they deserve to be displayed. Part one of her Queen Elizabeth Hall concert with the Medici Quartet includes her own, and several other composers' settings, of songs by Kurt Weill. Her daring version of *Mac the Knife* with wailing violin imitating a police siren, lifts Weill to heights I never thought possible. On Thompson's *Love Songs in Age* which uses the BBC Singers and Medici Quartet, I can say little except that it is a first performance and is based on Philip Larkin's poems.

Print the Legend. Radio 4 FM, 10.00am.

"Technical perfection in the service of idiosyncrasy" was the damning charge once brought against Hollywood films that mixed history with legend. It is examined by Christopher Frayling in his new series, starting with the western. Many sage sagas, it is argued, were historical settings of contemporary ideas. The director Fred Zinnemann discounts this theory in the case of his *High Noon*. He calls it nonsense to interpret his great western as an allegory for McCarthyism or the Korean War. A real western hero, Wild Bill Hickock, said that he stood between civilisation and savagery. Zinnemann would have gone along with that as a one-line précis of *High Noon*.

RADIO 1

FM Stereo. 4.00am Chris Wogan 6.00 Chris Evans 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Lisa Farnon, including at 12.30-12.45 Newsbeat and at 1.15 The Net 2.00 Nicky Campbell 4.00 Mark Goodier, and at 5.30-5.45 Newsbeat; at 6.15 The Net and at 6.30 The Net 7.00 The Essential Selection 10.00 John Peel, including the Finnish group Pan Sonic and Fleming Stars 1.00am Radio 1 Rap Show

RADIO 2

FM Stereo. 6.00am Martin Kellner 8.15 Praise for Thought 7.30 Sarah Kennedy 9.30 Ken Bruce 11.30 Anne Robinson 12.00pm Debbie Thompson 3.30 Ed Stewart 5.05 John Dunn 7.00 Today's the Day 7.30 Friday Night is Music Night 8.00 Listen to the Band 10.00 A Ballad Fossil Radio 2 Arts Programme 12.05am DJ Play Fairweather 1.00 Charles Nove

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 The Breakfast Programme, incl at 6.55 and 7.55 Racing Preview 8.35 The Magazine, incl Euronews and at 11.00 News: Chain Reaction 12.00 Midday with Mel, incl at 12.30pm Moneycheque, and at 1.15 Entertainment News 2.05 Rubico on Five 4.00 Nationwide, incl at 5.45 Entertainment News 7.00 News Extra, incl at 7.30 sport 7.35 Parliament on Sport 9.05 American Graffiti 9.35 Stop Press 10.05 Entertainment Superhighway 11.00 Night Edm, incl at 11.15 The Financial World Tonight 12.05am After Hours 2.05 Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am Sandy Warr 7.00 Simon Bates 10.00 Jonathan King 12.00 Tommy Boyd 2.00pm Anne Robinson 4.00 Scott Cleverton and Lowell Turner 7.00 Sean Bolger 9.00 Moe Dee 10.00 Mike Allen 1.00-6.00am Ian Collins

RADIO 3

5.55am Weather 6.00 On Air including Beethoven (String Quartet in F minor, Op 59 No 1); Box (In the Fairy Hills); Blow (O give thanks unto the Lord); Strauss (An den Baum Daphne); 8.05 Symphony Series: Mozart (Symphony in D, Overture II; Sagra di Sople); 8.24 Purcell Portico; A selection of songs 9.00 Morning Collection with Paul Gambacciani includes Chopin (Ballade No 3 in A flat, Op 47); Schubert (Sonatina in D); Dvorak (Symphony No 3 in E flat) 10.00 Musical Encounters, with Chris Wines, Mozart (Incidental music, Thomas, King of Egypt); Beethoven (Serenade in D for lute, violin and viola, Op 25); Purcell (Welcome Ode for Charles II; Welcome Viscount of the mighty king); 10.45 Artist of the Week: David Munrow, recorder, Daniel Purcell (Sonata in D minor); 10.52 Schubert (Piano Trio in B flat, D959); Philip Glass (Epilogue, Akhnaten); Liszt (From the Cradle to the Grave) 12.00 Jazz Week: Composers of the Week — Ellington, Evans and Wheeler, Michael (Gnu High: Music for large and small ensembles); Rayak 1.00pm Bristol Lunchtime Concert, Bartok Plus, Kocian Quartet performs Haydn (String Quartet in D, Op 20 No 4); Doherty (String Quartet No 2 in D flat) 2.00 Schools: Let's Make a Story 2.15 Music Box 2.30 Dance Workshop 2.50 Poetry Corner

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping Forecast (LW only) 6.00 News Briefing, incl 6.05 Weather 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day, with Canon Noel Vincent 6.30 Today, and 6.30, 7.00, 7.30, 8.00, 8.30 News 8.55, 7.55 Weather 7.25, 8.25 Sport 7.45 Thought for the Day 8.40 Short Story 8.58 Weather 9.00-10.00 Test Match Special (LW only) South Africa v England in the First Test from Carrington Park, Pretoria 9.00 News; 9.05 Desert Island Discs (FM only). Sue Lawley's castaway is the writer Umberto Eco (r) 9.45 Feedback (FM only) 10.00-10.30 News; Print the Legend (FM only). See Choice 10.00 An Act of Worship (LW only) 10.15 This Sceptre'd Isle (LW only) 10.30 Women's Hour (FM only) from 11.00 introduced from Belfast by Wendy Austin 11.00-4.00pm Test Match Special (LW only) South Africa v England 11.00 The following programmes are FM only until 4pm 11.30 The Natural History Programme, presented by Joanna Pinnock 12.00 News, You and Yours, with Chris Choi 12.25pm The Food Programme 12.35 Weather 1.00 The World at One, with Nick Clarke 1.40 The Archers (r) 1.55 Shipping Forecast 2.00 News; Cinema 100: Classic Serial — The Last of the Mohicans (22) (r) 3.00 News; The Afternoon Shift, with Laurie Taylor 4.00 News; 4.05 Kaleidoscope

FREQUENCY GUIDE

RADIO 1. FM 97.8-99.8. RADIO 2. FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3. FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4. FM 92.4-94.6. LW 198; MW 124.5-5.55am. CLASSIC FM. MW 94.9. LW 105.8. MW 115.7, 121.5. TALK RADIO. LW 105.3, 108.9. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Gillian Moxey, Rosemary Smith and Susan Thomson

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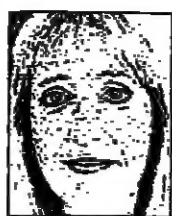
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Lynne
Truss



tional mangle. Julie Walters's soliloquy to her sleeping mother in episode five — answering the question "I did play with you, didn't I?" — was heart-breaking. Both Walters and Lindsay coped with complex demands, and although Walters's journey from snappy breadwinner to melting mummy ("Play w' me Mummy!") took a bit of swallowing, her performance was truly outstand-

exchange on the open deck. "You know how easily I can hurt you?" said the hardman. "I know how much you want to try," said Chris. Then they hit each other a lot. (Perhaps it's a "boys" thing.)

Completing the "but what? but where? but how?" sensation of last night's drama offerings was Tony Grounds's new series *The Ghostbusters of East Finchley* (BBC2) which occupied that dangerous area of comedy where canned laughter does not lend a hand, while strenuously unserious activity struts about in front of you, pleading with you to relax and enjoy it. All this is by way of saying: *The Ghostbusters of East Finchley* took some getting used to.


Paul Reynolds plays Kevin, an overgrown adolescent who dresses up as a hero and is not fussy about mixing genres. A commando one minute, he dons a diving

suit the next, complete with comical brass helmet. He lives with his mum and dad in a council block where cockroaches run riot and everyone is mad, and communicates through a broken ceiling tile with the girl, Jackie, who lives upstairs. Jackie works for the tax inspectorate and is a sincere, plain, friendly girl apt to say such old-fashioned things as "I'm not at that on a walking", meaning she's not keen on it. She loves Kevin unrequitedly and wants them to have lots of babies when they are married.

Goodness knows how this will turn out but it is certainly imaginative. And when the entire thing is less of a surprise, I suspect the individual lines will remain surprising. Jackie, played by Catherine Holmes, is a delight. Will all our rainbows be realized, or is this a case of tax collection? It will all so cheerfully preposterous, one can only say good luck.

CHANNEL 4

6.35am **Heathcliff** (r) (1265104)
7.00 **The Big Breakfast** (56017)
9.00 **Evening Shade** (r) (s) (82920)
9.30 **Schools: Eureka!** (46367017) 9.45 **Stop, Lo-
Listen** (4625272) 10.00 **Fourways Farm** (55713)
10.10 **Believe It or Not** (4058659) 10.27 **Maths Bo-
(3526291)** 10.40 **Off Limits** (1159388) 11.05 **Real
Set, Go!** (459814) 11.20 **Stage One** (56803)
11.35 **Schools at Work** (9128253) 11.40 **How
Used to Live** (4958185) (Teletext) (s)
12.00 **Simply the Best: Cheeses of Somerset**
(Teletext) (89458)
12.30pm **Sesame Street**. Early-learning series with J.
Roberts, Aaron Neville (65017) 1.30 **Katie &
Orbie** (r) (28833) 2.00 **Terrystones** (47698524)
2.10 **FILM: Chicken Every Sunday** (1949, b/w).
Amiable, period comedy, with Dan Dailey dream-
of fame and fortune, and Celeste Holm as the girl
suffering love. Directed by George Seaton (4853)
4.00 **Think Tank** (s) (524) 4.30 **Fifteen to One** (s) (91-
5.00) **The Factory** (r) (3594843) 5.45 **Holy Place** (r)
(s) (488949)
6.00 **Blossom** (r). (Teletext) (s) (901)
6.30 **Moviewatch**. The film magazine visits *Cover-
(Teletext) (s) (253)*
7.00 **Channel 4 News** (Teletext). (118017)
7.55 **Book Choice**. Victoria Glendinning reviews
Richard Hoggart's *The Way We Live Now*. (Teletext
(438185)
8.00 **A Taste of Africa: Egypt**. In the third of
programmes, Dorinda Hainer continues her culin-
ary journey around Africa with a visit to Egypt
(Teletext) (s) (9320)
8.30 **Brookside**. (Teletext) (s) (6727)



A tribute to the toothy Terry-Thomas (9.00pm)

9.00 **GRAPHIC Heroes of Comedy: Terry-Thomas**
(Teletext) (s) (6291)
10.00 **Freddie: Breaking the Ice**. American sit-com about a
radio psychologist. (Teletext) (s) (80185)
10.30 **Clive Anderson Talks Back** to Chantien Hines,
Joan Rivers and Rupert Allwood. MP (s) (465746)
11.15 **Crapsion Villas**. Fourth of a ten-part animal
soap opera, from the creators of *Sporting Image*.
(457307)
11.30 **NEW Eurotrash - The World Tour**. Antoinette
de Caunes and Jean Paul Gaultier return
to present a fifth series of the cult entertainment
show. (s) (18369)
12.00 **FILM: From Beyond the Grave** (1973). The *Frig-
id Night* season begins with Peter Cushing as the
proprietor of a sinister antique shop. Directed
Kevin Connor (125673)
1.50am **FILM: The Blood Beast Terror** (1987). Pe-
trusing stars as a 19th-century policeman
investigating the gruesome murders of two students
of an entomologist. Directed by Vernon Sewell
(8069654)
3.20 **FILM: The Ghoul** (1933, b/w). The best of tonight's
horrors. Boris Karloff rises from the dead to aveng-
e the theft of a sacred Egyptian jewel. Directed
T. Hayes Hunter (4413321) Ends at 4.45am.

THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

[illegible]

Atherton's innings paves way for Zimbabwean-born batsman to cut loose

Hick gives England upper hand

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN PRETORIA

CENTURION PARK (first day of five: South Africa won toss; England have scored 221 for four wickets against South Africa)

NOBODY in world cricket is better than Michael Atherton at responding to a sense of occasion without being overwhelmed by it. England must forever be grateful, for as South Africa threatened to turn this routine Test match into a celebration of their pace-bowling obsession, Atherton stood stoically in his path.

He has done it around the world many times before, of course, and there must be moments when he begrudges the frequency of the need. But on this momentous occasion, the first time England have played Test cricket in this land for 30 years, Atherton ironically found common ground with a son of southern Africa. Together, the captain and Graeme Hick tamed six seam bowlers and exposed the myth that said this pitch would put them through a trial of speed and bounce.

On a riveting opening day, watched by 9,300 in the pleasantly festive atmosphere of Centurion Park, Atherton and Hick put on 142, erecting a platform from which this game can be won. Hick will earn the popular praise, for his fourth Test century, for his most commanding and correct batting at this level, and for expanding his aggregate to 377 for twice over since he was last restored to the team. But it would not have been possible without Atherton. Technically tested by Donald, mentally goaded by McMillan, Atherton was hit three times on the helmet but remained utterly unflustered.

The portents had been grim at lunchtime. Put in to bat — though Atherton would have batted anyway — England had hobbled to 64 for three, donating two wickets and losing a third, the deflatingly important one of Graham Thorpe. In the last over of the session, already, it was clear that this pitch would terrorise nobody; England, though, as so often, they do, were finding a way to compensate.

In the hour that followed, England's prospects here could have gone the same old way, the way they did in Brisbane this time last year, in Kingston a winter earlier and in Calcutta in 1992. Three times in succession, England have begun overseas series with a heavy, demoralising defeat from which complete recovery has been beyond them.

The memories pressed in on them now but, if Atherton felt the pressures of the moment, he did not show it. On Wednesday afternoon, as he spoke of his hopes for this match, Atherton was asked if he felt a particular sense of history. "No," he replied dismissively. "It's just another Test match." In Atherton's terms, this was not to belittle the occasion but to confirm that Test cricket needs no bonus incentives. It is why he plays the game, why invariably he bats better in Test cricket than when the stakes are lower.

The same has not often been true of Hick. Not yet, anyway. But the widely-held theory that he never would reproduce his phenomenal first-class form at this level now belongs only to the shallow sceptics. Hick, a notably relaxed figure on this tour, batted here without inhibitions, mental or technical, so that, when Donald tried to intimidate him with the second new ball, he simply hooked him imperiously, as he had been doing with increasing poise through the heat of the afternoon.

It was a thoroughly impressive innings, secured only by a caught-and-bowled chance to Matthews on 67, but Hick should not settle for it. If he can go on today, carrying England towards a total of 400-plus, they will have all the good cards on a pitch that has offered little to the merchants of speed but just might assist the spin that England embraced and South Africa spurned.

Rymond Illingworth, as expected, remained loyal to his instincts, including his namesake, Richard, at the expense of Devon Malcolm. But South Africa went headlong down their blinkered alley-way, their four specialist fast bowlers augmented by Brian McMillan and Hansie Cronje. Clive Lloyd, the former West Indies captain, who is officiating as match referee, wryly recalled how he was once the butt of criticism for selecting a mere quartet of fast bowlers.

Given such narrow selection, "a gamble" even in the words of the South Africa coach, Bob Woolmer, Cronje's decision with the toss was unsurprising. It was also justified by conditions. The new ball did go through at uneven pace but this is not a quick pitch, nor a malicious one. England, with more care and attention, should have reached lunch no worse than one wicket down.

Stewart went first and will regard himself unlucky to have been spectacularly caught by Matthews, diving high to his right at square leg. The pull, however, was played lazily, giving the fielder a chance and giving Brett Schultz, the rugged left-armers, his first wicket against England. Whether he takes many more will depend partly on his suspect knees but also on whether he has more to offer than a wicked, late-swinging yorker and a fierce bouncer.

Ramprakash dismayed again. He need not have played at the off-side delivery from Donald that dismissed him, yet his bat jerked towards the ball while his feet remained rigidly entrenched. It was the stroke of one who had frozen yet again at Test level, one who averages only 17 after 31 innings. When Thorpe followed, committed by the exemplary line of Shaun Pollock and "walking" for the catch before posthumously thinking better of it, England were in deep waters.

Atherton, as ever, swam on strongly, disappointing only himself by his weary dismissal in the day's final half-hour.

Wainwright's trial, page 43



Smith congratulates Hick, right, on his century for England on the opening day of the first Test against South Africa

Reshaped England 'must aim for fresh horizons'

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ENGLAND'S meeting with South Africa at Twickenham tomorrow may not be the last this season if informal discussions with the world champions bear fruit. The Rugby Football Union (RFU), management and players seek regular meetings with southern-hemisphere teams, ideally on a home-and-away basis.

New Zealand cannot accommodate England next May and no response has yet been received from Australia. But South Africa, in the same time span, are ideally placed for one-off international, and now that the formula for the Super 12 tournament next year has been established, the RFU is optimistic that a playing pattern can be established attractive to both countries.

That, though, is for the future. Tomorrow is the start for England of a new cycle and yesterday Will Carling, the captain, put the past firmly behind him: "Whatever the result [on Saturday] it doesn't rewrite history," he said. "Had we met in the World Cup, the game might have had a natural link, but they won the tournament — and that's that. The challenge for us is to show we have made progress, that we can play differently with the new personnel we have in the side."

It will be the first occasion since the meeting with New Zealand in 1993 that England have taken the field at Twickenham as underdogs. Indeed, South Africa are on a roll, undefeated in 14 matches since August 1994 and with two outings in recent months, whereas England have not played since June and are putting together a new team.

"We need to bring on people like Damian Hopley and Mark Regan, we need to come off the field thinking we have progressed since the World Cup," Carling said.

Regan, the Bristol hooker, will be winning his first cap and Hopley, translated from his Wasps position at centre to the wing, his first full cap after appearing as a replacement for Carling against Western Samoa. He may find his work cut out, though, marking Chester Williams, the winkle-toed "Black Pearl" of South African rugby.

CENTURION PARK SCOREBOARD

South Africa won toss

ENGLAND: First Innings

*M A Atherton c Donald b Pollock 78

A J Stewart c Matthews b Schultz 6

G A Hick not out 105

M R Ramprakash c Richardson b Donald 9

G P Thorpe c Richardson b Pollock 13

G A Hick not out 105

R A Smith not out 1

Extras (fb 5, w 1, nb 3) 9

Total (4 wts, 84.3 overs, 553min) 221

*R C Russell, D G Cork, D Gough, R K Illingworth and A R C Fraser to bat

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-14 (Atherton 8), 2-36 (Atherton 21), 3-64 (Atherton 34), 4-205 (Hick 91)

BOWLING: Donald 20-8-36-1 w 1, 5-2, 4-0, 3-1-4-1, 5-2-8-0, 5-3-10-0, 2-0-13-0; Schultz 13-4-45-1 (6-2-15-1, 3-0-14-0)

0, 4-2-15-0; Matthews 17-6-44-0 (5-1-16-0, 6-1-12-0, 6-4-16-0), 2-3-1-4-1-2 (fb 2, 7-3-21-1, 4-0-10-0, 2-3-1-10-1); McMillan 11-2-32-0 (fb 1, 5-2-9-0, 5-0-23-0); Cronje 8-5-14-0 (4-3-2-0, 4-2-12-0); Kirsten 2-1-1-0 (one spell)

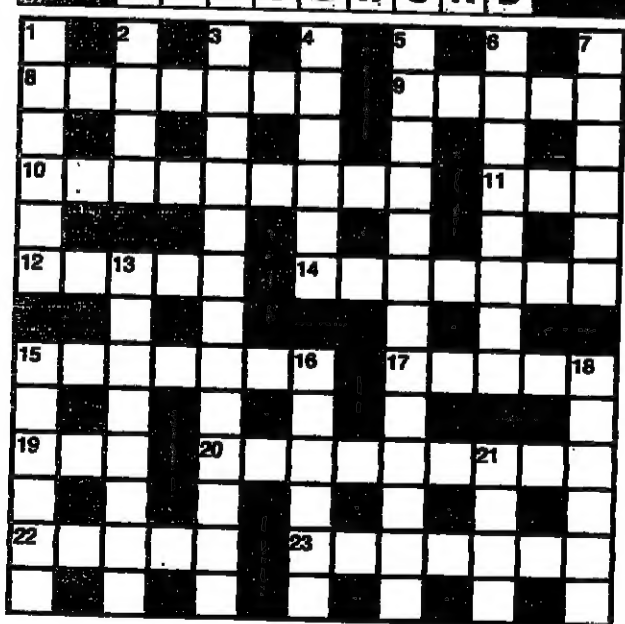
SCORING DETAILS: Lunch 64-3 (27.1 overs, 11min); Afternoon 34, Test 125-3 (57 overs, 23min); Afternoon 58, Hick 41; New ball after 80 overs at 5.02pm (198-9). Bad light ended play at 5.54pm.

SOUTH AFRICA: A C Hudson, G Kirsten, W J Cronje, D J Cullinan, J N Rhodes, B M McMillan, YD J Richardson, S M Pollock, C R Matthews, A A Donald, B N Seduz

Umpires: C J Mitchell (South Africa) and S Venkataraghavan (India). TV replay umpire: D L Orchard (West Indies). Referee: C R Lloyd (West Indies). TESTS TO COME: Second (Johannesburg) Nov 30 to Dec 4 (Third (Durban) Dec 14 to 18, Fourth (Port Elizabeth) Dec 26 to 30; Fifth (Cape Town) Jan 2 to 6.

Compiled by Bill Frindall

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 629

ACROSS

- 8 Bombastic (7)
- 9 Cognizant (5)
- 10 Per hate (4,5)
- 11 Speck: Morse E (3)
- 12 Abstracted; rather impressed (by) (5)
- 14 Capital of Iran (7)
- 15 A castle: sort of chair, of knot (7)
- 17 Surrey racecourse (5)
- 19 Herne's, Falstaff's 15ac Forest tree (3)
- 20 Borneo ape (5-4)
- 22 Work for nine players (5)
- 23 On the journey (2,5)

DOWN

- 1 A fight (6)
- 2 Civil wrong (4)
- 3 Commit oneself irrevocably (4,4,5)
- 4 At the mercy of wind and tide (6)
- 5 Tabloid nude (4-5,4)
- 6 Trilium & Cressida pimp (8)
- 7 Gravedigger (6)
- 13 Apetite monster (1933 film) (4,4)
- 15 Courting (6)
- 16 Textbook grade of academic (6)
- 18 Courtly dance (6)
- 21 With no slack (4)

The solution to 628 will be published Wednesday, November 22

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Stage fright leaves Ramprakash mindful of international future

What anguish there is for someone unable to fulfil an immense talent. Poor Mark Ramprakash. All that perfection which comes to nothing when he enters the Test arena. The love affair he craves always involuntarily thwarted at the altar.

When Ramprakash played a derelict, capitulating flap of a stroke at a harmless delivery from Donald, the thousands who glory in his exhilarating performances for Middlesex cringed with embarrassment.

How could the batsman who seemingly has it all, at county level, yet again shy away from his international destiny?

Never was there clearer demonstration of how the mind can refuse to serve the dexterities of hands and feet. We have all known brilliant students who froze in the examination-room at the sight of the question paper. When Ramprakash arrives at the Test wicket, it is as though mentally he were walking a high wire over Niagara.

Cricket, a team game for individuals, can be infinitely cruel in the way it exposes private deficiencies. Ramprakash is a technically flawless player seemingly overcome by international stage fright. In the brief time he was at crease, he had already struck the ball off the middle of the bat as sweetly as can be, yet was then out failing to move his feet to a ball he could well have left, caught behind by Richardson.



DAVID MILLER
At the first Test

This was his return to the fold after being dropped after his pair against West Indies at Lord's. His Test career now probably hangs, if once more given the benefit of the doubt, on another three innings at most: the second here, and then the second Test at Johannesburg. Given the nature of his problem, the prospect is indeed bleak.

The phenomenon is not new. Mike Gatting, for example, took some 50 Tests to realise his true quality, and the same to an extent could be said of the gloriously fluent Tom Graveney, though their averages were superior to that



Ramprakash: froze

of Ramprakash. He has a severe dose.

It occurs in all sports. Albert Quixall was a boy genius as a footballer 30 years ago, but founded as an international, and arguably the same could be said of John Barnes, who has seldom justified his talent in some 80 international matches. Paul Way came and went in golf. Tom McKean had a supreme gift for 800 metres, and could not run a tactical championship race to save himself.

Maybe sports psychology could yet rescue Ramprakash, though already he has unavailingly consulted Mike Brearley, the former England captain, who is a specialist in this field. What is almost sure is that Raymond Illingworth's blunt Yorkshire approach as manager is the antithesis of what Ramprakash requires.

There have been few tactical strategists with Illingworth's grasp of the game, though I wonder how well he understands frailty of personality, never mind his well-known laconic maxim that "cricket is 50 per cent in the head, 50 per cent in the heart, and 100 per cent in the technique".

Modern sport widely exploits psychology. Golf, athlet-

ics and tennis all have their consultants, dealing with the vogue issues of "visualisation" and "focus". David Hemery won his Olympic gold medal with visualisation.

Cricket, however, particularly English cricket, is less sympathetic to frailty above the shoulders. While technical shortcomings are accepted as part of a player's character, sometimes humorously, mental uncertainty is a condition altogether more suspect. Psychology is for sissies, so to speak.

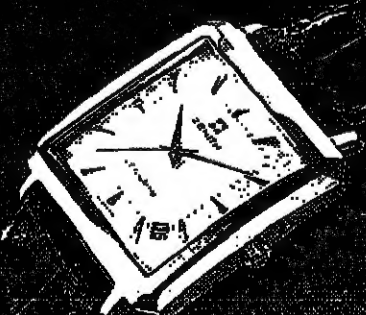
Leicestershire, during David Gower's time, once employed a psychologist pre-season, and found enough evidence to regard it as positive advice. Somerset have dabbled with it, and Kent's Australian coach, Daryl Foster, is fond of referring to the win-psychology of Lillee and Marsh. Yet their Test focus was spontaneous.

The luckless Ramprakash was yesterday seen in stark contrast to his captain. Once more, Atherton gave a lesson in relentless will-power and mental domination of the bowlers. His duel with Donald was part of the day's fascination, and in five hours and 40 minutes at the wicket in intense heat, facing 240 balls, he made only three false shots before he was out to the new ball from Pollock that lifted up under his chin. It was an innings doubly memorable: the art of the opening batsman, and the unflinching resolution of a captain.

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